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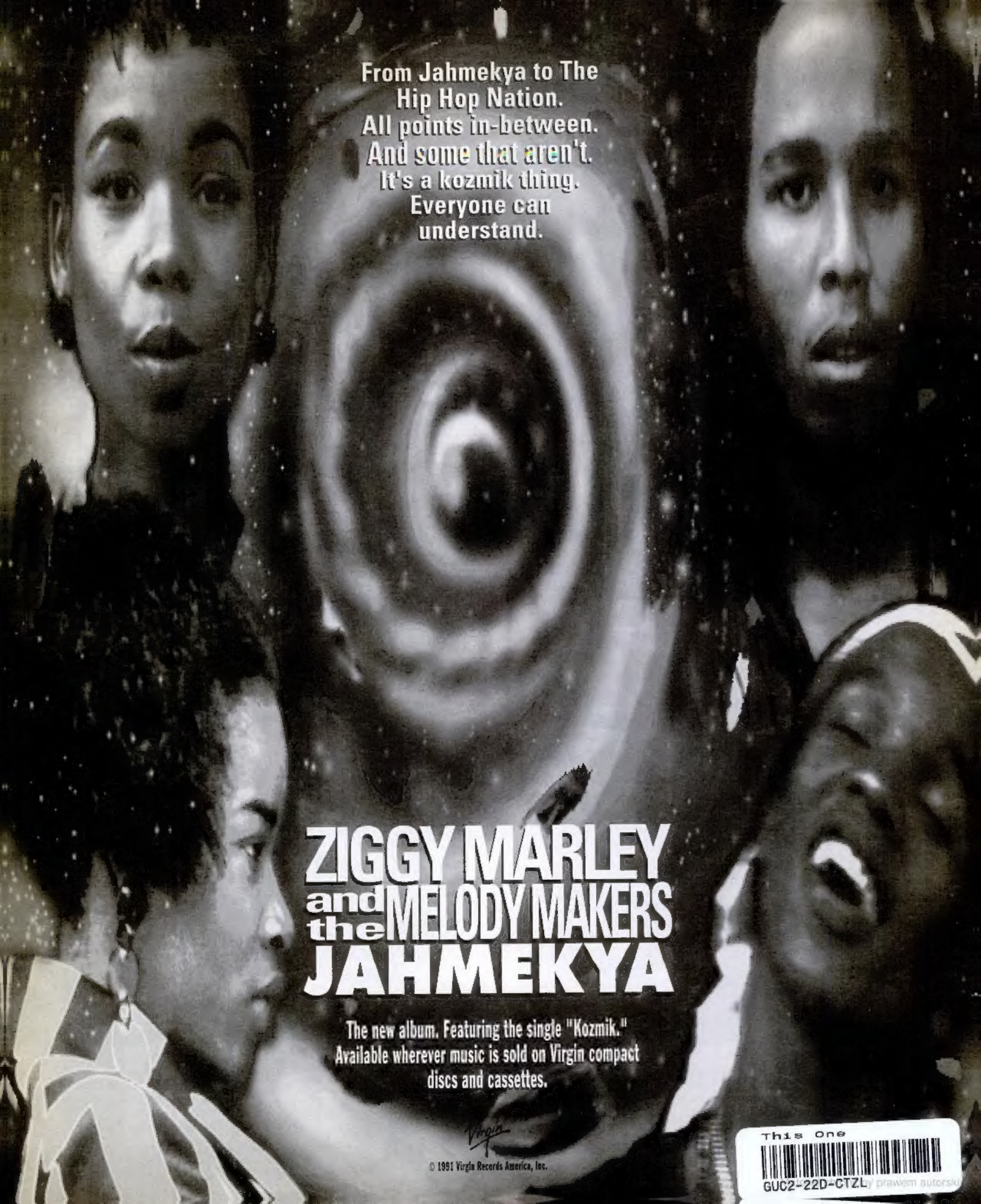

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IN

Fresh Prince, page 36.

In training for a new tour and album, Prince reveals his master plan for overcoming the post-*Graffiti Bridge* malaise. By Scott Poulson-Bryant.

Win SPIN! **Enter our contest to bring the mighty SPIN organization to your very own campus. Details on page 64.**

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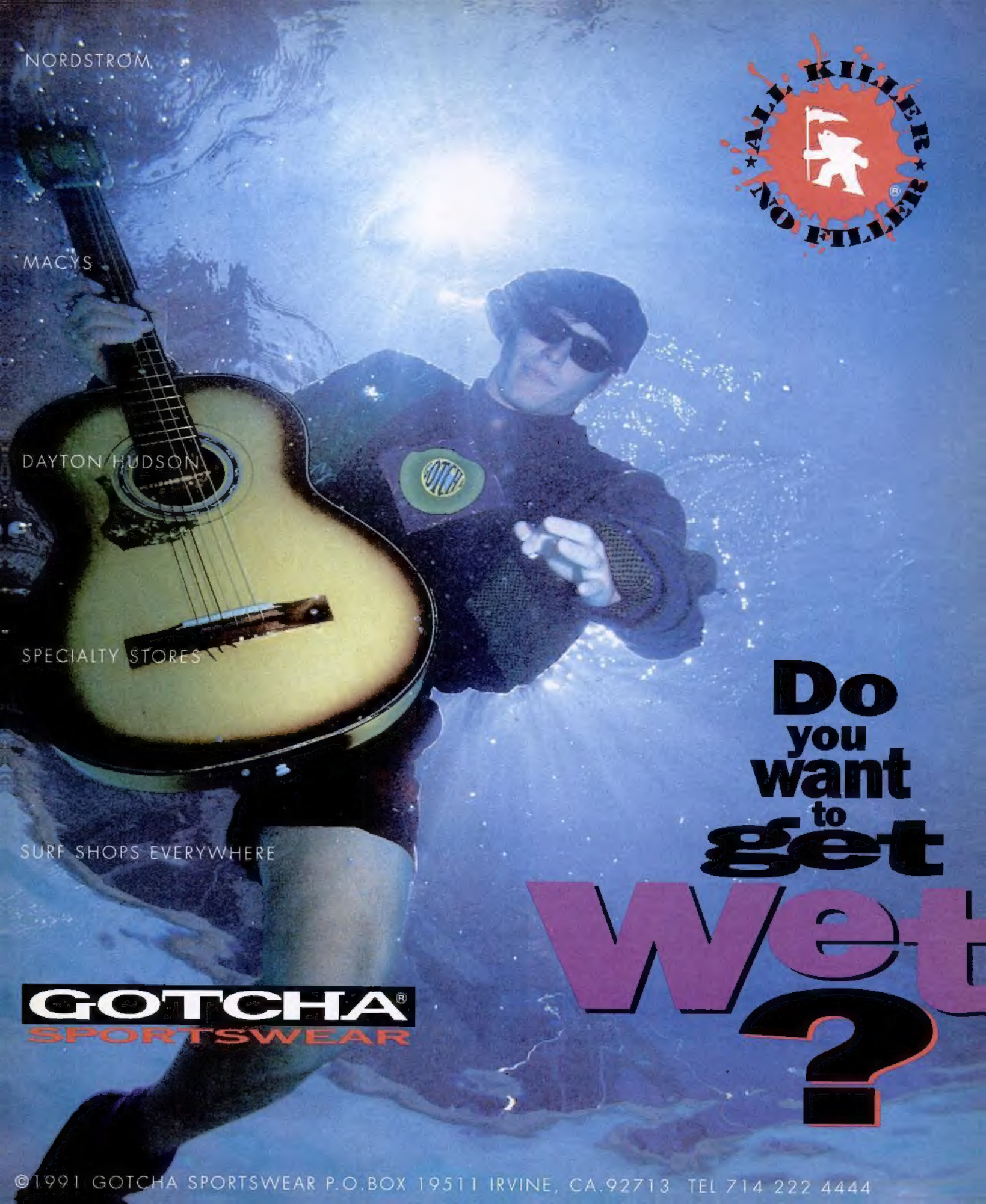

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WE TRIED.

We sat around for days and tried to write an ad for Squeeze's new album, *Play*. Zip. Then we hit on a dangerous strategy: Tell The Truth. We like Squeeze. A lot. We wouldn't have signed them if we didn't. And we think *Play* is a great Squeeze record. Maybe their best, but then again, we're biased. We'll leave the superlatives to critics. If you ever liked Squeeze, *Play* will remind you why. If you never knew Squeeze, this might be a good time to start.

PLAY, THE NEW ALBUM FROM SQUEEZE.

Produced by Tony Berg. On Reprise Records and Compact Discs.

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TALE SPINNERS

This month marks the debut of New Revolutions (*page 32*), a column conceived to promote independent music. Cowriter **Daniel Fidler** has been a DJ for four years and **Nancy Leopardi** has been a music photographer for seven. "The best part is going out to see new bands in small clubs that have only a handful of people. Nothing matches that kind of energy," says Leopardi. • "I completely disagree with Danny Sugerman comparing Axl Rose to Jim Morrison [SPIN, November 1990], because Morrison never had to establish personal legitimacy the way Axl Rose does. Like many heavy-metal stars today, he uses his money as evidence of popular acceptance," says West Coast Editor **Dean Kuipers**, who tells us why Axl Rose is both a metal-head hero and a pain in the ass (*page 72*). Kuipers has also written for *Omni* and the *Nation* • In a different life, **René Miville** worked in London and Italy for fashion magazines. Then he moved to Florida, discovered art photography, and never looked back. Miville's photographs of Fugazi (*page 46*) show his ability to catch and keep the moment, a social historian in his own right. "It's nice to do things my own way rather than trying to find the artistic significance of a model looking to her left," he says. • Fashion Editor **John Olson** says his theory of fashion is "more of a journalistic approach than just taking pretty pictures of pretty people. In this issue's fashion piece (*page 66*) I wanted to take a sexy but satirical look at education." • **David Quantick** is a free-lance writer for *NME*, *Punch*, and writes sketch comedy for BBC Radio Four. In his first article for SPIN, Quantick covers EMF's unbelievable rise to accessibility (*page 61*). Quantick says that "EMF is the future of rock'n'roll—probably."

Daniel Fidler and Nancy Leopardi

Dean Kuipers

René Miville

John Olson

Employee of the Month is Matt Hanna, Assistant to the Publisher. Matt's name is an anagram for a borough of a famous American city. Guess it and win a date with him. He'll buy.

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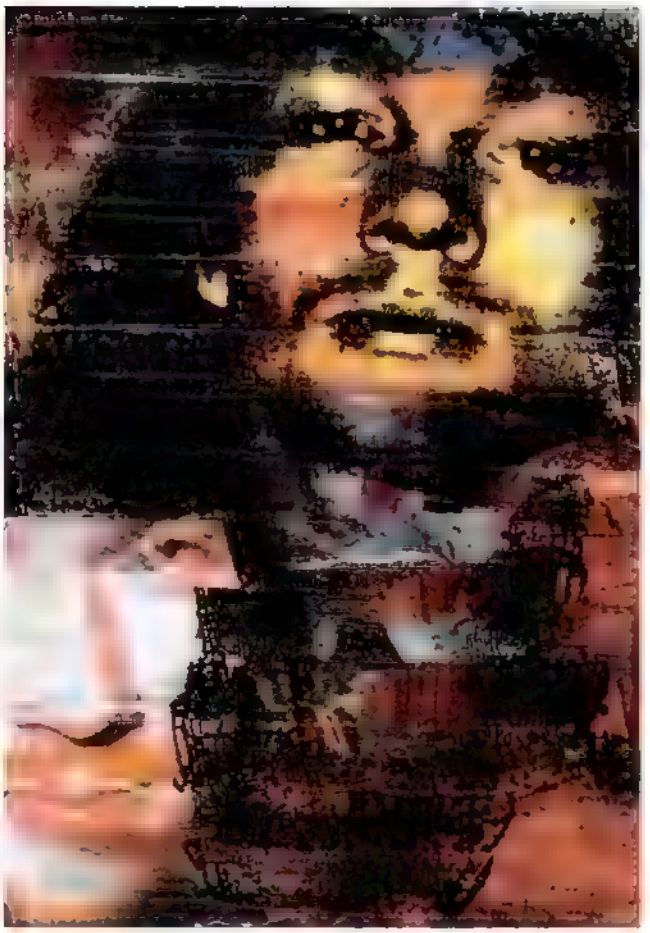
TOP SPIN

In this era of political correctness, should we worry that some letters aren't represented in state initials? And what about shrinking acronymns? Alphabet soup by DEAN CHRISTOPHER.



Travel back through Guns N' Roses' past for a portrait of the artist Axl as a young man in homestate Indiana, beginning on page 72.

For years I have been horrified that we have no states that begin with the letters B, E, J, Q, X, Y, or Z. What a tragic paradox—the world's model of democracy with undemocratic representation of state initials! Since our government seems unwilling to erase this national shame, SPIN has decided to act.

There are 50 states, while our alphabet has only 26 letters. In an ideal America, we would expand our alphabet to 50 or reduce the states to 26 for a perfect 1-to-1 ratio. But even in our imperfect world we can achieve a more equitable distribution of available alphabetic resources.

Consult your atlas. Observe that we are overloaded with M and N states—no fewer than *eight* apiece! "A", "I", and "W" can each boast of four. Equally degrading, our national imagination is so underpowered that four states even begin with the *very same word—new*! Or we resort to compass-point designations, as if some American states have no more outstanding traits than to be south or north or west of another state! But even so, is it fair to overlook *east*?

The SPIN Solution to the Rescue:
We hereby correct this situation before it is corrected for us by some smarty-pants invader, probably one with an alphabetically complete roster of provinces. We have kept as many existing state names as possible. But some were unavoidably consigned to the trash bin of history. Historical imperative justifies this ruthlessness. You can't make a salad without murdering some lettuce. Here are the solutions

Indiana + Z = Zindiana: a nice zingy ring.
Alabama + B = Balabama: deliciously plosive!
Oklahoma + Y = Yoklahoma: reminiscent of oxen working the plains.
Alaska + J = Jalaska: stark, pithy, wintry tone!
Maine + E = Emaine: consistent with Down East speech patterns.

A special challenge posed by the difficult letters "Q" and "X" was swiftly solved thus:

Connecticut = QUONNECTICUT (retaining the ancient glottal stop characteristic of the Pequot language); and Rhode Island = X (pronounced *Kssssss*). Our smallest state gets the shortest name of all!

We also eliminated some redundancies as follows

Nebraska = EAST WYOMING, since there are many "N" states, but no "East" states; and South Dakota = BAJA DAKOTA, eliminating one redundant "South" while giving Balabama a fellow B.

Conservatives will scowl, but SPIN has dealt with them before. Our solution will prevail, and one day Americans will chuckle about the time when we gave our republic's names such thoughtless treatment. By the way, there are entirely too many streets and high schools named after the same few Presidents. And come to think of it, not enough colleges are named after third basemen or alto sax players.

More Alphabetic Strangeness Explored:
And that's not all. Have you noticed that virtually everything of cultural impact in American civilization is packaged in three-letter bursts? MTV, NFL, CNN, ESP, UFO, PMS, VCR, NBA, CIA, HIV, IBM, NOW, ITT, the Gulf War's nifty new contribution, BDA, and so many more. The colorful presidents: FDR, HST, IKE, JFK, LBJ. Even our fading TV networks are triliterals. And BLT is a major sandwich.

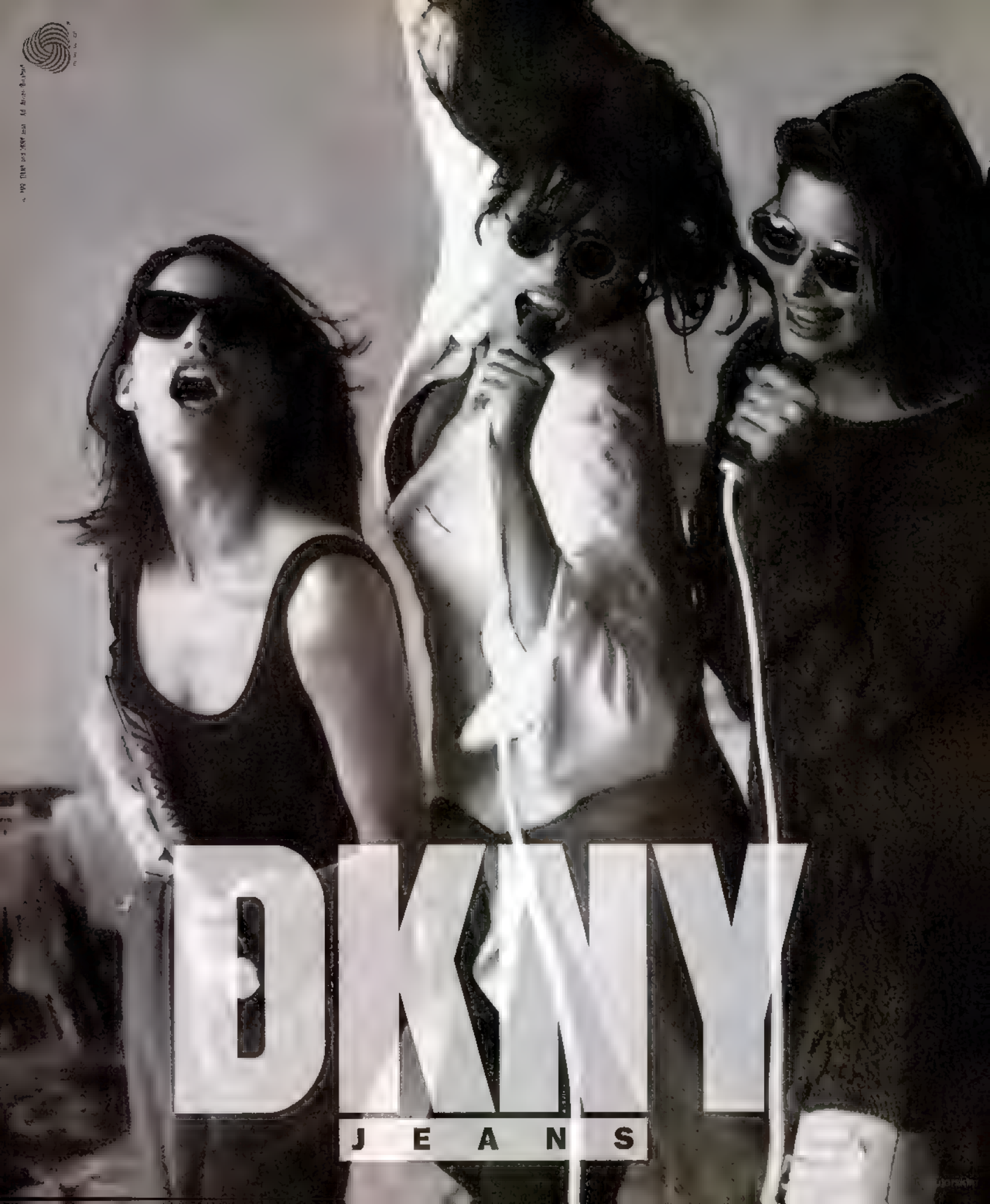
Americans are the world's top bottom-liners. Nowhere else is time such an endangered commodity. So abbreviation is an increasingly important skill. It lets us squeeze our discussions into a busy schedule of hip hop lessons, televiewing, jean-leg ripping, and shopping for designer baseball caps to wear backward.

There is nothing wrong with idea capsules. They are efficient handles for tossing complex ideas around. (Remember $E=MC^2$ and other neat formulas?) The only problem is the tendency to believe that because the expressions are brief, what they represent is simple and easy to deal with. Luckily it doesn't really matter since nobody is listening very closely anyway, so the mere fact of sprinkling your conversation with gobs of triliterals marks you as an educated, with-it G-U-Y or G-A-L.

But why should *three* be the magic number for our most popular topics? It seems certain that *more* than three doesn't work well. Perhaps it's too much to absorb as the national attention span shortens. Maybe that's why fewer and fewer people tend to RSVP, whereas my bet is that nearly everyone would RSV. LSMFT has sold no Luckies since the 50's. NAACP, BBDO, and AFL-CIO seem on the down side of their curve. And the ACLU, and its anagram UCLA, are no match for their natural enemies, the FBI and USC.

Are we trending to a *two*-letter future? Already there are signs—two letters and one character, the ampersand (&), as in S&L, P&L, R&R, M&M, Q&A. Ultimately we will pass through digraphs like CD and PC to a succinct and superefficient age when one single letter will stand for huge slabs of thought, perhaps even the total attainment of entire civilizations. What rich coversations we will have then—with *plenty* of time left for shopping and trying out chic little restaurants with the latest, most exquisite flavor pills!

And one day we will find ourselves in the middle of a truly zen afternoon when *no symbols at all are used*, and everything is just perfectly, ya know, understood. We will smile, and it will be so darned cool.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POINT BLANK LETTERS

EDITED BY
NATHANIEL WICE

Sir Real

Re: L.L. Cool J—"Real Rap's Real Superstar" [July '91]. Cool story by Poulson-Bryant, but what are y'all doin', running ads for Coke? I understand the authenticity issue here—yeah, L.L.'s back, he's dope, he's around-the-way. But in the age of the sound bite, "real"—as in "Real Thing"—don't count for shit, gang. Did "real" people die in the Middle East? The prowar sloganeers (my favorite T-shirt, so ignorantly hateful: "FUCK IRAQ, IT'S TIME TO KICK ASS") probably don't think so. Nothing's "real" anymore, so we get "virtual" reality and lose ourselves even further. The word real is practically useless. Zappa'd probably tell you that. By the way, I'll vote for Zappa for President. *Real*-ly.
Mark Woodlief
San Gabriel, California

Rock the Vote

I'm just a middle-aged white chick with no particular loyalty to or love of Frank Zappa's music. But Zappa for President ["Signs of the Times," July '91]? A thinking man in the Oval Office! I swoon at the prospect.

Frank *must* be the product of a Jesuit education. The damn Jebbies teach you to reason, force you to think, challenge you to stand up and say that the emperor is buck naked, but forget to mention that most of the people with whom you'll have to deal are moronic greedy cretins.
Jean Prescott
Biloxi, Mississippi

I got an incredible charge out of reading the interview with Zappa. Here is a musical genius who has been overlooked by my generation as a result of "poodle rock" and MTV, who has some awesome views and ideas. He should have been on the cover instead of L.L. Cool J. I am a 21-year-old college student, and I have never voted. If Zappa runs for President, you can bet I'll be at the polls! Go for it Frank. I am sick and tired of eating the government's yellow snow!
Kate Herbert
Alton, Illinois

Perhaps SPIN's past political and social activisms were mere preludes for what now is surely your publication's patriotic duty: Give us an address to crank up the Zappa for President movement!
Mac Perry, Jr.
Atlanta, Georgia

Send your cards, letters, and campaign contributions to: Frank Zappa, Box 5418, North Hollywood, CA 91616.

Remembrance of Things Past

Thanks for the only *honest* and intelligent interview in current music today—John Robie. Finally someone has the nerve to tell it like it is, and I wholeheartedly agree—today's "new music" *does* suck. Deee-Lite is a *joke* and I'm glad it's been put into print. Bravo, SPIN and Celia Farber, for an interview I could finally relate to. I'd love to party with John Robie. My hero!
Jackie Cable
Maple Heights, Ohio

Eighties dance guy John Robie didn't start the fire.

Needless to Say

Your July AIDS story hit a personal vein. The facts, statistics, and personal experience (I am a recovered user for two years now) proves that needle exchange should be *allowed* in New York and *all states*

I support Jon Parker, Dan Williams, and anyone else who believes that needle exchange is necessary because of my own past experience in the difficulties of receiving IV needles.
Damona R. Tracy
Nashville, Tennessee

This Is Only a Test

I'll let you in on a little secret straight from the ol' rumor mill ["Cashing In," June '91]. I was tested for [the] AIDS [virus]. The results were *negative*. As for the mysterious clinic report on the cover of *Ritual de lo Habitual*, it is not an AIDS test, but a pregnancy exam that came out positive.
Perry Farrell
Los Angeles, California

Won't Get Fooled Again

I picked up the June issue of SPIN, the first I'd ever read, because of the simple line on the cover, "How to Get Your Own Guns N' Roses Interview" [June '91]. These nine words caused me to grab the magazine and pay for it, without taking the time to look through it, as I usually do, when purchasing magazines.

Guns N' Roses is my all-time favorite band. Slash was the first inspiration for me to pick up the guitar and to get some decent equipment. Axl has recently inspired me, eight months after starting the guitar, to begin trying to write lyrics and music and to try to put together some songs. The band as a whole has inspired me to get my own band together at 13 years old. I am trying to be as serious as an eighth-grade honor student can be, and I must give them a lot of credit for keeping the group, with only a few changes, together.

I have always wondered how they work together to make such cool music. I want to learn how they think, so maybe one day that will be *me* on the stage cranking out some rock'n'roll.

Up until now, I have been buying every magazine with so little as one short paragraph on G N' R to help me find out more about them. I almost stopped breathing when I saw those nine simple words. *Maybe I could have a chance to ask them myself!* "No guarantees," you said, but I didn't care! I'd try anyway. So, I ripped the page out and ran up to ask my dad, the music whiz of the family, how I should go about filling it out. The shock hit me like a speeding train when my dad skimmed through it and told me it was just a way for the magazine to get back at the band for the lousy contract they made and those now-hated nine words were just to sell some magazines.

What kind of a cruel joke was this?! How could you not even give so much as a little "not" at the bottom of the page? Go ahead! Try teasing me again with the people I look to as gods!! I won't be fooled anymore! I won't be made into a fool ever again; not by this cheap, lying magazine!

I think I deserve an apology.
Laura Skerratt
Bernardsville, New Jersey

Editor's note: Laura, we're sorry that you didn't get our joke until too late.

I have listened to Guns N' Roses for years, loved their music and defended them.

As a journalist, I have to say that their interview contract is a pile of shit.

I hope I don't hold anything against them tomorrow, but who knows?
Lisa Warren
Tyler, Texas

Thy Will Be Done

I've just read Topspin [June '91] and I find myself in complete agreement. I am 21 and sick and tired of these right-wing fascist yahoos dominating the media culture. If only your essay would appear in *Newsweek*, *Time*, or the *National Review*!

Maybe it's like H S. Thompson says: George Orwell was off ten years. It's going to be 1994.
Over my dead body
Matt Jones
Colorado Springs, Colorado

I was enjoying your article on George Will's self-serving castigation of youth [Topspin, June '91] when I read, "Will is like an uptight old woman bristling at the mention of sex, because he feels he *must* be indignant, that not to be will imply his resignation to his fading relevance to the world's vital core, its youth."

As an over-50 female who feels vital, warms rather than bristles at the mention of sex, and enjoys youth culture as much as any other culture, I was taken aback at the prejudice that this remark revealed. It is a pity that an otherwise sound analysis of the Will phenomenon was marred by a bias toward elderly females as blatant as Will's distorted view of the young.
F. Wiesenfeld
New York, New York

R U Fair-Minded?

I always believed that reporters should just report the facts; however, it was obvious that you have taken a stand against pro-lifers such as myself ["RU-486: Drug of Choice," June '91]. You portray us as a narrow-minded minority; however, I feel it is you who is narrow-minded.

If such a pill as RU-486 were available in the U.S., there is a possibility that more people would use abortion as a form of birth control. Instead of tackling the problem after it has occurred, why not try and find a better solution before the problem has occurred?

In the future, I hope you can be open-minded enough not to portray the pro-lifers as a crazed minority that gets a thrill bombing abortion clinics. The majority of us are decent people who believe there is a better solution for unwanted pregnancies than RU-486.
Mark R. Cosenza
Hanover Park, Illinois

Happiness Is a Warm Gun

DJ Flex says that rock is no longer a force for change because soldiers, sailors, and airmen listen to it on the eve of battle [Point Blank, June '91].

I'd like to think that the Gulf War has changed the world for the better, and that my fellow military broadcasters' efforts to provide information and entertainment to the troops—whether it's for "psyching up to kill people in Iraq," or maybe comfort them at a time when death was staring them in the face—had an uplifting effect on the morale of our nation's fighting men and women.

Rock'n'roll isn't blind rebellion—rock'n'roll is the freedom to do what you know is right.
SPL Joe Baptist
U.S. Army, Greece

Address letters to: Point Blank, SPIN, 6 West 18th Street, New York, NY 10011. Include your name and daytime phone number for verification. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

APPROVAL OF SEAL

Not afraid to dream, the inimitable Seal takes you on a journey to the future of the funk.

Seal is to vocals what Larry Wright—the street-drummer kid from the Spike Lee Levi's ads—is to drums. Seal's got that same feel; there's something truly funky about him. Maybe it's the scars on his cheeks that look like the shoe polish football players dab under their eyes to cut the glare of the sunlight. Seal says they just appeared one night. You gotta believe him. God probably put 'em there to cut the glare of the limelight.

Seal's a natural star—all six feet four inches of him. In conversation, his eyes and person wander around the room, as he absentmindedly strums his guitar. He's not impolite, he's just in the clouds. And now having conquered Europe with his gap-toothed grin, silver-inlaid dreads, and his two dance-y but orchestral singles ("Crazy" and "Future Love Paradise"), he's set to stun the U.S. with his self-titled debut album, produced in techno-color by Trevor Horn. Sure, Horn's a meddler, and yes, Seal looks like a Frankenstein-monster version of Terence Trent D'Arby, Lenny Kravitz, and Milli Vanilli. But don't be fooled: Seal's for real.

Not that Seal's as streetwise as Larry Wright, who still plays sidewalks. But he's been around. For five years he made leather clothes (a sure sign of a true journeyman) and unsuccessfully peddled demos. But he finally bolted, ending up in Bangkok, where he sang blues and handed out brochures. Eventually he came back to London, hooked up with Adamski, and cut "Killer," a No. 1 single that lived up to its name.

Uncredited on the "Killer" sleeve, Seal went solo and signed with the notorious Trevor Horn's label, ZTT. Most artists who work with Trevor Horn barely live to regret it, but Seal ain't most artists. Indeed, his LP's liner notes thank "ZTT for proving all the doubters wrong and showing they still have the biggest futuristic balls in the business."

Horn's space-age layered sound and Cecil B. deMille–like methods overwhelm—but there was no way Seal's hoarse but sugary vocals could get lost in the mix. Besides maybe Frankie Goes to Hollywood, Seal is the only artist who writes all his stuff on an acoustic guitar—which he cradles with his left arm just like his hero: Jimi Hendrix.

Seal has lots of other heroes (which may be why he's destined to be one). Not just the obvious, like Jimi and Sly Stone, but weird ones like Joni Mitchell. An unashamed hippie, he wanted to make his album "a journey," and judging from his mix of house music, '70s soul-funk, synth rock, and quiet Cali soft rock, he has succeeded.

In other words, Seal's cool. Only two things bum him out. One is people who are too lame to dream ("Crazy" marvels this: "In a sky full of people / Only some want to fly"). The other is Public Enemy. "I don't see them as productive to the progression of mankind," Seal says. "I know blacks have had a hard time for a long time, but I've heard that song before."

Seal, you can be sure, creates some songs you've never heard before.

BOB MACK

Seal might look like a Frankenstein-monster version of Terence Trent D'Arby, Lenny Kravitz, and Milli Vanilli. But don't be fooled Seal's for real.

Robyn Hitchcock & the Egyptians *Perspex Island* (A&M). Another dose of slightly skewed brilliance from the master of, um, slightly skewed brilliance. Focused production and more concise songwriting make this the strongest Hitchcock effort in some time. "She Doesn't Exist" is the closest thing to a pop epiphany your ears will have encountered in many moons. (Greer)

Anthrax *Attack of the Killer B's* (Island). Forty-four-plus minutes of B sides and unreleased tracks that are eclectic, loud, and sometimes silly. Public Enemy's Chuck D puts in an appearance on "Bring the Noise," creating a righteous metal-rap blend, while the live version of "Belly of the Beast" is bombastic heaven. Perfect to tide fans over until the next release. (Spencer)

Various Artists *The Grunge Years* (Sub Pop). If someone ever holds a public burning of all Sub Pop records (the label would probably make it a barbecue), this one at least should be spared for the musical time capsule. Thirteen superior previously released tracks from a mouth-watering lineup including Nirvana, L7, Babes in Toyland, Screaming Trees, Love Battery, and more. Mucky slimy, sticky fun. (Fidler)

HEAVY ROTATION

STAFF SELECTIONS

Lawnmower Deth *Ooh Crikey, It's . . . Kids in America* (Earache). Ridiculously fast but amusing English speed metal, featuring such soon-to-be-classics as "Seventh Church of the Apocalyptic Lawnmower," "Sheepdip," and "Got No Legs? Don't Come Crawling to Me." Also includes two covers of Kim Wilde's "Kids in America," one of them a weird, very-out-of-context-here, industrial-dance version. (Blackwell)

Ex-Girlfriend *X Marks the Spot* (Forceful/Reprise). Full of street legal, girl-group harmonizing and a bottom-heavy Full Force production, Ex-Girlfriend comes off like a distaff Bell Biv DeVoe. Here's the follow-up album En Vogue will probably never make; my masochistic masculinity has never been better bruised. Ouch. (Poulson-Bryant)

Van Halen *For Unlawful Carnal Knowledge* (Warner Bros.). The gang tries to regain its metal credibility with a naughty acronymic album title, a reunion with producer Ted Templeman, and vintage heavy guitar, as Eddie's keyboards move to the back and Sammy starts to sound like he indeed belongs in the front. This one might stop people from saying, "But after David Lee Roth left . . ." Well, okay, maybe not. (Hanna)

PEARL OF WISDOM

Pearl Jam all decked out. *Left to right*: Mike McCready, Jeff Ament, Eddie Vedder, and Stone Gossard.

It's a rock'n' roll comfort thing—you wouldn't understand. Especially if you're a guard at Harrod's department store in London, where Seattle's Pearl Jam discovered that the ensemble the band wears—cut-off fatigue shorts accessorized with electrical tape, tie-dyed long underwear, and rock T-shirts—is completely misunderstood. The members of the seductively churning rock band found this out when a guard asked them to leave the premises, even though vocalist Eddie Vedder offered to go straight to the men's department and buy something else to wear. He was denied, and Pearl Jam was escorted from the store.

The guard obviously didn't get the fact that the Pearl Jam style comes from a tight musical community, and unless you've been living on Mars you know that the Seattle scene is a mighty one. Guitarist Stone Gossard and bassist Jeff Ament were in the seminal grunge outfit Green River with Mudhoney's Mark Arm in the late '80s, after which Gossard and Ament joined Mother Love Bone. After Mother Love Bone vocalist Andrew Wood passed away last year, they got together with Soundgarden's Chris Cornell and Matt Cameron to record a tribute project, *Temple of the Dog*, with Pearl Jam's Vedder and its master of long guitar leads, Mike McCready.

"This year Seattle had a convention and it was just like being in L.A.," says Ament. "There are bands who've moved away who are putting 'From Seattle' on their flyers. So I guess it's a draw."

So much of a draw that Cameron Crowe filmed his new movie, *Singles*, in Seattle with Matt Dillon, who plays in the fictional band Citizen Dick with Gossard, Ament, and Vedder. The movie is a veritable lovefest of local musicians. "It was kind of a nightmare when we were making our album, because the movie was going on and we just wanted to finish recording and go out on the road," says Ament.

So Pearl Jam went far away from home to work in a 500-year-old house in England, surrounded by tennis courts and lots of sheep. The band mixed its debut album, *Ten*, and watched the NBA finals, which were sent over from America on video. Basketball is important to Pearl Jam. Only recently the band played under the name Mookie Blaylock, after the New Jersey Nets point guard. When the guys asked Vedder to join the band, this was the chain of events: "We had five days of rehearsals, we wrote ten songs, and then we played a show," says Vedder. "On the seventh day we went into the studio and then to see the Bulls play the Sonics in the Kingdome."

Gossard adds, "Then we went to the mountaintop and rejoiced."

LAUREN SPENCER

PHOTO BY BART EVERLY

"Woman Combing Hair"

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DEAR ELVIS,

Who's the true love of your life?
Bill Eddie
Lubbock, Texas

Well, son, I've loved some fine ladies. Some was Sunday school types and some was downright good-for-nothing trash. But the love of my life is a darling I only met once and ain't never seen since. I was in a truckstop down in Macon, Georgia, and I was a chawing down on a hunk of catfish, and it was so damn good I got carried away and swallowed a big ol' bone. I was choking to beat the band when this pretty little red-headed gal ran over and did that Heimlich maneuver deal on me and I spit that fish right out on the table. I wiped my mouth off and said, "Thanks, honey," and she said, "My pleasure, Elvis," and walked out the door. I'll never forget that face. It's funny, but there ain't a day that goes by especially if I eat fish or have to spit something up, that I don't think about her.

Eat to the beat.

BITING THE BULLET

Young guns: Bullet LaVolta, *left to right*: Yukki Gipe, Todd Phillips, Duke Roth, Bill Whelan, and Clay Tarver.

Bullet LaVolta is a very good rock band from Boston, a town that has spawned more than a few very good rock bands (though not as many, I think, as it could—probably because there's too many college kids around). The band's music hammers at you in a Black Flag-*cum*-AC/DC kind of way, which might lead you to think it sounds like all those other postpunk metallic bands, the names of which escape me at the moment. But these guys don't, maybe because Bill Whelan, the bass player, is a big Pet Shop Boys fan. Or maybe it's because they understand that all the power riffing in the world won't help if you don't write decent songs. Which they do.

The band is readying its major-label debut, *Swan Dive*, which should broaden its audience beyond the coterie of critics and fans it has garnered as indie-rock stars. But the boys don't see much difference in being on a major.

"We still don't have any money or anything," says lead singer Yukki Gipe. "The only good thing about a major is that you get to spend more time on the record to make the songs sound the way they should."

"This is first time you've been able to hear the rhythm section on a Bullet LaVolta record," adds drummer Todd Phillips.

Swan Dive was produced by Dave Jerden, noted for his work with Jane's Addiction and Alice in Chains. "There's really no such thing as a 'Dave Jerden sound,' " says guitarist Clay Tarver of why the band picked Jerden. "He just brings out what's essential. It worked out really well for us."

JIM GREER

radio graffiti: cypress hill

Ladies n' gentlemen . . . presenting the illest record from L.A. this year. The real one, the funky fool one! Tha crew that yooz tuh be known as Devastating Vocal Excellence sprayz tha block with nine milliyz leavin' blood stainz that spell "Cypress Hill." Tha debut self-titled album features Mixmaster Muggs, B-Real and Sen Dog. This disc splashes wit' some wild-ass topicz! The ferst joint is "Pigs," which ripz the badges off corrupt Cali cops. Cypress Hill hits tha issues head on wit' a bat.

Left to right: Mixmaster Muggs, Sen Dog, and B-Real

"Yo, these are everyday experiences," sez Sen. "We did our homework. Cops pull you over for wearing a certain type a hat or havin' a fly car. Pigs are the corrupt cops that do it."

All I know iz that this record soundz better than hearin' mom duke beef! I gotta hand it to 'em, they made the best album musically and lyrikally I've ever heard . . . frum Cali! Muggs iz a good producer, able to take small beats & make big trax. On the samplin' tip it sounds like various bandz playin' along side 'em. One guy sounds like James Cagney from tha crib, buggin wit' ad libs n' ticklin' ya ribz. Cypress Hill makes me think of the projects that bare tha same name in Brooklyn. This iz psychadelik migrane muzik. I ain't bullS. #%@$in'!

BONZ MALONE

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spin gladiator

Gladiatin' for real. *For Right*, SPIN's Daniel Fidler slams the Powerball.

SPIN research assistant goes for gold.

What's our country coming to? In the past three year *American Gladiators*, the TV show where contestants compete against Schwarzenegger-size opponents for cash prizes, has become the fourth highest-rated syndicated weekly series.

"It's become popular because everyone can do it," says Gemini, one of the show's senior Gladiators. "You can be a desk guy or a couch potato. There's no restrictions."

Unfortunately my editor heard about New York tryouts, and sent me to test my mettle against New York's finest (and biggest).

Thousands of people came to try their luck at pull-ups, the 40-yard dash, the rope climb, the shuttle run, and Powerball, a game of dunking a ball into a tube. The winners went on to a series of video-personality screenings, designed to weed out the serious from the sickos.

"We need people we can depend on," explains cohost and NFL Hall of Famer Larry Csonka.

"There's never been a real big guy who's won a competition," says Gemini. "The mid-range guy has enough power, speed, and strength to do it all."

Well I'm a mid-range guy, but after 16 pull-ups, my arms said bye-bye, and I found myself staring at a tiny girl who was coaching me to "push it." "I'm sorry," I mouthed. Then I fell.

Thanks to my press pass (otherwise that would have been the end), I was allowed to continue. I managed to qualify in the dash, which got me pumped up enough to arrange a game of Powerball with a writer from *Sports Illustrated*, who tried to convince me he was out of shape. I didn't buy it. I saw the way he carefully adjusted his head gear and knee pads. Then he basically kicked my butt.

Next year I'll challenge the reporter from *Sassy*.

DANIEL FIDLER

match the rap stars with their real names

1. MC Serch
2. Flavor Flav
3. Ice-T
4. Queen Latifah
5. Big Daddy Kane
6. M.C. Ren
7. Posdnuos
8. Monie Love
9. Heavy D
10. Ice Cube
11. MC Lyte
12. Slick Rick
13. Rakim
14. Q-Tip
15. Afrika Baby Bambaataa
16. Tone Lōc
17. Chuck D
18. KRS-One
19. Grandmaster Flash
20. Salt (Salt-n-Pepa)

a. Lawrence Parker
b. Simone Johnson
c. Oshea Jackson
d. Dwight Myers
e. William Griffin
f. Antonio Hardy
g. Anthony Smith
h. Tracey Morrow
i. Michael Berrin
j. Cheryl James
k. Dana Owens
l. Nathaniel Hall
m. William Drayton
n. Jonathan Davis
o. Carlton Ridenhour
p. Ricky Walters
q. Lorenzo Patterson
r. Lana Moorer
s. Kelvin Mercer
t. Joseph Saddler

STEVEN BLUSH

1.f, 2.m, 3.h, 4.k, 5.t, 6.q, 7.e, 8.b, 9.d, 10.c, 11.r, 12.p, 13.e, 14.n, 15.i, 16.g, 17.o, 18.a, 19.l, 20.j

ALL TOP PHOTOS ROB BROWN EXCEPT PHOTO ON RIGHT NANCY LEOPARDI; BOTTOM PHOTO JAIME BIONDO.

BURGER KINGDOM

A legendary hamburger chain celebrates its 70th anniversary.

Seventy years. Thank God. We still have something to believe in. I'm talking about America's only fast-food chain with a soul White Castle. *White* is for brightness; *Castle* is for strength. There is something very special about those little square burgers. Aficionados give them nicknames, "Belly Bombers," "L.B.s" ("Little Bastards"), "Sliders," and so forth, ad nauseam, no pun intended. With varying menus from state to state, White Castle can be overwhelming. Most people who have stepped into one at five in the morning and made their way through drunkards, quarreling couples, and blitzed-out jocks to find a friendly face that'll serve them four Castle Surf n' Turfs (a Deep Catch fish sandwich between two burgers, available at select locations) will tell you with gleaming eyes about the time they bought an official White Castle refrigerator magnet or how they've framed their complete set of White Castle place mats for their living room wall. These people don't need any vastly overpriced New Age crystals to guide them through the darkest hour. A Party-Pack with two sides of fried-clam strips is infinitely more rewarding.

White Castle does not serve food alone. With it we get a free side order of something to believe in. Here's to another 70 years! JOHAN KUGELBERG

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Saddle up with the Four Horsemen, *from left:* Haggis, Ben Pope, Frank C. Starr, Dave Lizmi, and Dimwit.

HORSING AROUND

Madonna's "Like a Virgin" is on MTV, and the Four Horsemen are happy.

"I just saw her movie," Horsemen founder–rhythm guitarist Haggis relates enthusiastically. "It was incredible! Though I know saying that blows my punk credibility."

"Punk credibility is a cheap commodity," notes drummer Dimwit, formerly of legendary punkers D.O.A. "If I had a choice between punk credibility and boning Madonna," says Haggis, "I know what I'd do."

Like Haggis's former outfit, Zodiac Mindwarp, the Four Horsemen are a twisted version of your basic L.A. bad boy band. punk roots and biker bravado, with tunes heavy on heartfelt three–power-chord energy. But a cynical sense of humor separates them from the *Spinal Tap*–ish guys who hang out on the Strip.

"My idea of being badass is sitting by an outhouse in Texas with a Chihuahua and a rare Spanish skin disease, drinking a Mexican beer," says Haggis. "Not hanging around the Rainbow by the Great White display."

The band's lead singer is another story. "Frank Starr is your archetypal, womanizing, loony idiot," says Dimwit. "Everything a rock singer should be."

"He works in a scrapyard in the Valley operating the car crusher," adds Haggis. "He's really into that."

The Horsemen's debut stalled for a year when Starr ended up in jail. He was "riding to the Cathouse on a moped with a German helmet on to prove he was more macho than the guys on their Harleys," recalls Haggis. "But he fell off his bike and the police caught him with cocaine in his pocket."

But the members of the band won't let the rock'n'roll life-style get them down. "I used to read stories about a rock star putting his head in the oven 'cause he couldn't take it anymore," Haggis says. "If you can't take the money and the girls, then cut your hair off and go live in Idaho."

Haggis's favorite magazine is the *National Enquirer*. Why not the *Star* or the *Weekly World News*? "Not enough pictures of Madonna," he explains.

DAINA DARZIN

transatlantic bliss

When PM Dawn's first American record company allowed its debut single, "Ode to a Forgetful Mind," to be released with the words ODE TO A WASTE OF VINYL etched on the inner groove, the group had an inkling that it wasn't quite a platinum-potential priority yet. Separated from that company and aligned with U.K. management, the New Jersey duo, sibilings Prince B. and DJ Minute Mix, relocated to London. The home of a hundred hopelessly high-speed hip hop records proved a revelation for PM Dawn.

"It had a giant effect on our music," affirms Prince B. "We recorded a couple of tracks in New York, but they're not on the album. They're good but they're morbid and dark. That's just the way New York makes me feel. When we got to London, though, there was this relaxing vibe, so the new songs are upbeat and mellow." That inspired indolence pervades every beat of PM Dawn's sumptuous debut album, which features an unexpected array of vocal arrangements and harmonies. "I worked hard for the money to record in a studio," explains B., "and I wanted to use every track. So I started singing." Allied to its canary-like vocal chops, and making the group unique in the field, is PM Dawn's Anglophilia, leading it to build its shimmering, summery "Set Adrift on Memory Bliss" on a sample from Spandau Ballet's "True." Prince B.'s stone-faced delivery makes the Pet Shop Boys another point of comparison. B. agrees, citing "West End Girls" as a particular epiphany.

DJ Minute Mix

"That shit was a monster," he says.

With soft '60s referencing, and occasional sexually ambiguous lyrics, can PM Dawn come home and hold its own in the sweaty locker room of heavy U.S. hip hop? Prince B. shows no fear. "Basically, if I want to be hard, I will. I've got it, and if I need it, I'll use it."

JONATHAN BERNSTEIN

Prince B.

Drum. Your Own Rhythm.

Surprisingly
Mild.

MISED INFORMATION

Who Could Sleep With All That Racket? The Goo Goo Dolls new song, "I'm Awake Now," is featured in *Freddy's Dead: The Final Nightmare*, part six of the *Nightmare on Elm Street* series.

Pay for Play? Sub Pop Records recently advertised in Seattle that the company would review demo-tape submissions for a fee of $35. "If just one sucker sends in their money, the ad is paid for," said label cohead Jon Poneman. • **North by Northwest** A better way to spend your $35: a full-week pass to nearby label K's International Pop Underground Convention at the end of August in Olympia, Washington. In addition to concerts, there will be disco dancing, a kickball game between vegetarian and meat-eating underground rockers, and a showing of all five *Planet of the Apes* movies. • **Highway to Hell** As a promotional gimmick for its new album, *Hellacious Acres*, the Texas-based metal outfit Dangerous Toys is giving away deeds for square-foot blocks of property in Hell, Michigan. • **Stayin' Alive** Skyclad Records is now compiling a Bee Gees cover song tribute album. Any interested bands with a love for the has-been trio should write P.O. Box 661393, Los Angeles, CA 90066. • **For the Record** *The Guinness Book of Records* has recognized Daddy Freddy as the world's fastest rapper. Speech pathologist Dr. John Haskell confirmed that Daddy can utter 528 syllables per minute. • **Instant Publicity** Dee Barnes, teeny host of Fox-TV's rap show *Pump It Up*, is suing N.W.A's Dr. Dre for allegedly physically assaulting her in an L.A. club last January. Interestingly, her decision to sue coincided with the release of N.W.A's *Niggaz4Life*. Meanwhile, N.W.A bad-boy protégés Above the Law are preparing a response to Bronx rapper Tim Dog's overhyped single "Fuck Compton," which defends Barnes and threatens Dre. • **Nunsense** Goth-rock band the Sisters of Mercy played Buffalo on its *Vision Thing* tour at the same time that a 7,000-member order of nuns also called the Sisters of Mercy met there for the "visioning process" of its new organization. No confusion was reported. • **He's Not a Pepper** Anticensorship activist and part-time rock critic Dave Marsh issued a press release calling for a boycott of Dr. Pepper and 7-Up, because the brands' parent company, Dr Pepper/7-Up Co., financially supports the PMRC. The only problem is that, as far as anyone can tell, his accusation isn't true. • **Falling Rock Zone** There's a 1 in 6,000 chance that in the next 50 years a mile-wide asteroid hurtling through space at 16 miles per second will slam into the earth and kick up enough debris to blot out sunlight, bringing civilization as we know it to an end. • **Dead on Arrival** John R. Krasic is not only a right-wing Republican congressman from Ohio, he's also a certified Deadhead. Too bad concert security didn't appreciate this when Krasic tried to take the stage to make a speech at a recent Dead concert in Washington, D.C. They threw him offstage. • **Look Ma, No Hands** There exists a $1,200 machine called the Electro-Ejaculator that extracts semen for artificial-insemination purposes. • **Bouncing Czechs** Vaclav Havel is writing the liner notes for his pet Czech band Pulnoc (Czech for *midnight*), to be released on Arista later this year. An earlier incarnation of the band, the legendary Plastic People of the Universe, recorded a couple of albums at Havel's summer cottage. • **Les Paul** is back in the studio recording a jam session with some of his guitar disciples, including Slash, Jeff Beck, and Keith Richards. Also in the studio: Beastie Boys, Slaughter, Pet Shop Boys, and Diesel Park West. • **On the Road** Crowded House, Richard Thompson, School of Fish, Pat Benatar, Daddy Freddy, Alice in Chains, Bob Dylan, Firehose, Jello Biafra, Alice Donut, and EMF

Purr-fection Marvel Comics' latest superhero is a singer striving for pop fame who moonlights as the sultry crime-fighter Nightcat. In a new marketing twist, the character is based on a real-life aspiring pop star, Jackie Tavarez, who performs under the name Nightcat. So far the comic is selling much better than her album.

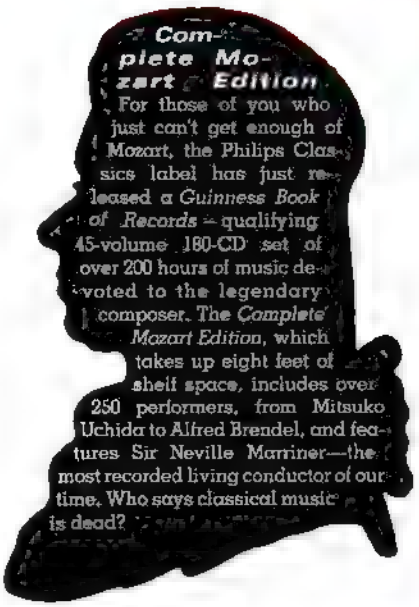
Mud Slinging The members of Yothu Yindi, a mud-caked Australian aboriginal band, were the odd men out at this summer's New York New Music Seminar. The band combines modern keyboards, guitars, and drums with traditional instruments such as the didgeridoo, a six-foot wooden pipe.

THE COLD ROCK STUFF

THESE ARE A FEW OF OUR FAVORITE THINGS.

Home Shopping Entertainment Club

If you're bummin' over the fact that you can't buy your Bon Jovi T-shirts and paraphernalia while watching cable TV, now you can stop. Thanks to a joint venture between McGhee Entertainment (managers of Bon Jovi, Skid Row, and the Scorpions) and the Home Shopping Network, the tentatively titled Entertainment Club will soon offer couch-potato rockers the opportunity to order a wide range of rock merchandise, including cassettes and CDs even before they're available in stores. It's just a joke, right? No, unfortunately it's not.



Complete Mozart Edition

For those of you who just can't get enough of Mozart, the Philips Classics label has just released a *Guinness Book of Records*–qualifying 45-volume, 180-CD set of over 200 hours of music devoted to the legendary composer. The *Complete Mozart Edition*, which takes up eight feet of shelf space, includes over 250 performers, from Mitsuko Uchida to Alfred Brendel, and features Sir Neville Marriner—the most recorded living conductor of our time. Who says classical music is dead?

Trumped!

In these days of restraint the age of '80s big spenders seems eons ago, and its most heinous symbol, Donald Trump, has taken a dive. The story of Donald is detailed in *Trumped!* by John R. O'Donnell, former president of the Trump Plaza Hotel & Casino and ex-confidant of the onetime ex-billionaire. O'Donnell claims that the author of *The Art of the Deal* was actually a lousy deal maker who "may be the only person who ever lost money promoting the Rolling Stones." Cold, calculated, and racist—as described here—Trump seems to be getting his just desserts.

Pro-Choice TV

In the midst of all the antiabortion mania sweeping the nation, it's time for women to take a stand and draw the line. Filmmaker Juliet Cuming has put together a pro-choice public service announcement featuring influential female entertainment role models such as MC Lyte, Dee-Lite's Lady Miss Kier, and Sonic Youth's Kim Gordon.

The spot targets what the press release describes as the "MTV generation." Check out your usual youth-oriented channels for an enlightening peek.

Compiled by Steven Blush, Kerry Diamond, and Jim Greer

Stairway to Hell: The 500 Best Heavy Metal Albums in the Universe

Chuck Eddy's idiosyncratic critical views and hyphen-heavy style will be familiar to readers of SPIN's record review section. His new book, *Stairway to Hell* (Harmony Books), is a well-written, well-thought-out compendium of 500 "heavy metal" records. Be warned though: Eddy's idea of heavy metal is broad enough to encompass Teena Marie and Miles Davis as well as obvious picks like Aerosmith and Led Zeppelin. Should help start a lot of arguments.

Motley crew: the staff of SPIN.

Fun Saver Panoramic 35

If you don't have a couple of thousand bucks to drop on a professional panoramic camera, but lately your photos are just too damn square, don't despair. For a cool $13.95 you can pick up the Kodak Fun Saver Panoramic 35, a one-use camera, preloaded with film, that makes 12 lovely long 3 5- inch by ten inch color prints. Now even your most deadly boring family photographs can be as cool as an ELO album cover.

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New music is not dead. It's still with us, stronger than ever. Hiding, lurking, waiting to surface. Political. Angry. Mindless. Intelligent. Disturbed. Something with meaning. Something to believe in. Open your ears. Listen. By DANIEL FIDLER and NANCY LEOPARDI.

Some New York City bands try to reflect the city's caustic atmosphere in their musical intensity, taking their aggressions out on their guitars and creating a "wall of sound" sensory overload. And not many do it better than the three-piece **Unsane**, as heard on its self-titled debut LP (Matador). High and low distortion struggle back and forth in a musical street fight for audio dominance, while a steady pulse of drum beats provides some sanity. Gut-wrenching vocals shriek of victimization and frustration, tapping into the core of New York City's beaten and tortured psyche. A must, if you can handle it • After your ears stop bleeding, cool off with the new LP from New York's **Swans**. *White Light From the Mouth of Infinity* (Young God Records/Rough Trade) is the band's most stylistically controversial to date. Lush production, refined orchestral layering, and a wide array of acoustic instrumentation provide a soothingly pleasant atmosphere, while Michael Gira's romantic lyrics have a dark, gothic quality; a chilling contrast of the beautiful and the ugly; sometimes hypnotic, sometimes annoying, but definitely worth the trip. • **Gumball**'s *Special Kiss* (Primo Scree/Caroline) solves the problem of a restless night when you've got 50 tapes stacked up and can't decide what you're in the mood for. It's a sampler of musical styles courtesy of singer-producer-guitarist Don Fleming, who sought to incorporate all the different elements of his past band experiences (Velvet Monkeys, Dinosaur Jr.) on one album. Some tracks rock out à la Black Sabbath, some slam your head against the wall courtesy of blazing hardcore, and some make your stomach sick with wimpy pop. "The history of rock on record," Don Fleming says. "That's us." • Moving farther west, Louisville, Kentucky's **Slint** is taking depression to new artistic heights with *Spiderland* (Touch and Go), the band's new LP. *Spiderland* is full of simple, subtle guitar rhythms set over moody bass lines and schizophrenic vocal interplays—lots of wailing alternating with whispering. Good if you're looking for a late-night escape, or suffering from mild insomnia. • Somewhere in Chicago members of Ministry, Skinny Puppy, Killing Joke, Lab Report, and Nine Inch Nails grouped together and called themselves **Pigface**, the Traveling Wilburys of industrial music. The end result: *Gub* (Invisible). A cheap, eclectic crash course in the industrial continuum—but don't worry, you don't have to be an industrial fan to appreciate the fun. Contributing artists each break free from their day jobs' musical confines and go off in their own distinct directions. A playful, highly experimental jamsession. • Go north, young man, go north to Minneapolis, Minnesota, the land of ten thousand lakes and six fish, where the brash trio **Babes in Toyland** are stirring up that city's tired scene with *To Mother* (Twin/Tone), the bands' new EP. While musically aggressive and competent (although not too original), it's the strength and charm of singer-guitarist Kat Bjelland's sweet screaming vocals that constitute this EP's high points • Change your gender, add a cowboy hat, and you've got Minneapolis's **Cows**, whose new LP, *Peacetika* (Amphetamine Reptile), contains some of the best white-trash cow-punk blues around. Two- to three-word vocal phrases full of anguish, honesty, and sincerity mix with energetic grunge guitar to produce music of abrasive intensity. The subject matter reads like a contemporary masterpiece for the "no one understands me" generation; a refreshing, sincere approach to personal failure. • Stay north and go real west, yeah, that's right, to Seattle, where the members of **Mudhoney**, the lazy bums, have waited almost two years before releasing their new LP. *Every Good Boy Deserves Fudge* (Sub Pop). Okay, okay. There's not much original-sounding material here. But who cares? Mudhoney's last LP, a milestone combination of '60s garage and '70s and '80s punk, was so damn good that a few more formulaic songs here and there won't hurt anyone. Right? But grunge lovers beware. The Seattlites are focusing more on their '60s garage influences, right down to Mark Arm's vocals. And while the songs are still tight, loud, and fuzzy, we know the kids are capable of more. Get it anyway.

New York's Unsane, *from left*: Charles Ondras, Chris Spencer, Peter Shore.

NANCY LEOPARDI

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: STEVE ALBINI

Ex-singer guitarist, Big Black; producer, Pixies, Naked Raygun, and Poster Children.

STEVE ALBINI'S "A" LIST

Slint, *Tweeze* (Jennifer Hartman). "The most perfect bummer you can have."
Helmet, *Strap It On* (Amphetamine Reptile). "Each part of the album is an exercise in control."
Bread Winner, *Kisses Men on the Mouth* (Merge). "It's just supremely fucked-up, very skillful music."
Cows, "Chow" (seven-inch, Treehouse). "It's just a, gosh, Chow, let's see, it's just an enveloping record. A perfect record."
Steel Pole Bathtub, *Tulip* (Boner). "Goofy, but not idiotic."

ARTIST SIDETRACKS

Steve Albini's Biggest Gripe: "Too many bands that have business aspirations as opposed to being a band first and foremost."
Worst Nightmare: "Waking up to discover I'm [ex-Hüsker Dü drummer] Grant Hart."
Most Wants to Torture: "I really don't have physical malice toward anybody. But I wouldn't mind embarrassing some people. Like Nelson. And they're twins. Genetically identical. So it doesn't matter which one.

For information on records or artists: Amphetamine Reptile, 2541 Nicollet Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55404, (612) 872-0648, Boner Records, P.O. Box 2081, Berkeley, CA 94702-0081, (415) 695-1154, Caroline Records, 114 W. 26th St., 11th Floor, New York, NY 10001, (212) 989-2929; Invisible Records, P.O. Box 16008, Chicago, IL 60616; Matador Records, 611 Broadway, Ste. 712, New York, NY 10012, (212) 995-5883; Merge Records, P.O. Box 1235, Chapel Hill, NC 27514, (919) 929-0711; Sub Pop Records, 1932 First Ave., Ste. 1103, Seattle, WA 98101, (206) 441-8441, Touch and Go Records, P.O. Box 25520, Chicago, IL 60625, (312) 463-4446; Treehouse Records is defunct; Twin/Tone Records, 2541 Nicollet Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55404, (612) 872-0648.

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FRESH PRINCE

As Prince unveils his new album and prepares for his first U.S. tour in three years, SCOTT POULSON-BRYANT asks, Can he ever regain his crown? A rare interview.

In people's minds, it all boils down to "Is Prince getting too big for his britches?" I wish people would understand that I always thought I was bad. I wouldn't have gotten into the business if I didn't think I was bad.

—Prince, 1985

SPIN: How did you manage to get Prince to sit down and talk?
ME: I don't really have the answer to that question. I just sorta showed up at Paisley Park and, well, we chilled out.

Phase One

There's this guy, see. He's from this midwestern metropolis that's majority white and not really known for a whole lot of musical innovation. He comes out with this record, *For You*, full of falsetto vocals and sexual come-ons, and word is he played all the instruments himself, wrote all the songs, sang all the parts, the works. And his name is Prince. Not his chosen name; his given name. And he's black. Then another record—a huge black radio hit. Called "I Wanna Be Your Lover." Lyric: "I wanna be the only one who makes you come . . . running." Then another record: *Dirty Mind*. And the brother is decked out in bikini drawers and a raincoat, high-heeled boots, hair a tattered mess of straightened locks. A screaming-guitar, keyboard-driven half hour fairly dripping with the barely-20s precum imagination of a brother who might as well be from another planet. Masturbation, incest, and an early *Saturday Night Live* appearance, complete with a funk-punk toppling of the mike stand, and a star is born. Rock critics can't get enough—thought Hendrix died?—and hipper listeners settled in for a bumpy ride across the start of the Republican '80s.

Controversy: some wack political stuff ("Ronnie, Talk to Russia"?) and some necessary questions asked. Is he black or white? Is he straight or gay? And *1999*, an apocalyptic worldview at 23. Après ça? Le déluge: *Purple Rain*, *Purple Rain*, in which the Kid does his own dang, conjuring up the spirits of masters past and going crazy, crying like a dove, taking us with him, telling us he's a star. Fifteen million folks worldwide agreed.

SPIN: So you met the band members first, right?
ME: I got to Paisley Park on a Saturday. Everything

RANDEE ST NICHOLAS

"I had a dream that I was playing this song on *MTV Unplugged*."

"Why don't you?" I ask him.

"I want to. I will."

was quiet. Driving up, through the wooded terrain of Chanhassen, Minnesota, you don't expect to find this gleaming metropolis of sound production nestled back from the road. The outside is a glittering, eye-catching white. I imagine that it might get lost in the snow of those Minneapolis winters.

It's Saturday, so nobody's really around except for a few engineers chomping away on cookies in the lounge-kitchen area who let me in. Everything is wood and pastels. Gray, blue, green, pink, and, of course, purple pastels. The couches in the waiting area, the tables in the dining space. Through here, I go to Studio B, where Rosie Gaines, keyboardist and vocalist and recent addition to the New Power Generation, Prince's new band, is behind the spit-polished glass, tapping her feet to the beat of a slammin' demo. Her blond hair, an amalgam of 'locks and braids and loose strands, is a colorful addition to an already colorful recording space, dominated by a sprawling mural (circa *Graffiti Bridge*) depicting Prince-ian signs of symbols of love and hope and sex and dreams.

The New Power Generation, *left to right*: Tommy Barbarella, Rosie Gaines, Michael Bland, Kirk Johnson, Tony M., Levi Seacer, Jr., and Damon Dickson.

Should they punch in a vocal here? Where's the sample in this part? Questions asked in the serene blanket of recording hums, but none of the frantic hubbub often encountered in a recording studio, particularly when there's a tour to rehearse for and multiple parts to learn and . . .

"I sang this melody to Prince, and he immediately wanted a demo put down. So I was up all night, in here all day, laying down these tracks," Rosie says, smiling. "Prince makes you want to work. You learn. I've had my own band before, so I know how it can be to get people together to work." We talk about the new Prince album, on which Rosie's gospelized vocals are prominently featured, and the live dates already done in L.A., where Prince is now, doing Prince things. "He said you'd be in town," Rosie says.

Oh, well, no meeting with Prince. Guess I'll go to his new club.

Prince with Rebecca Blake, director of "Kiss" and the new "Diamonds and Pearls" video.

Glam Slam is an old warehouse turned into a nightspot by Prince and Gilbert Davison. The crowd mixes hip hop hippies and tall white women in skin-tight dresses. Eight TV monitors play the *Sign o' the Times* concert film, and it occurs to me that the oft-requested concert album is actually a concert film, filled with the fronts and poses that even a musician of Prince's ability couldn't convey on vinyl. The DJ from L.A. spins much Prince. I can't remember a time when I danced to "When Doves Cry," "Kiss," "I Wanna Be Your Lover," and "Alphabet St." all at the same party.

I meet Damon Dickson and Tony M., dancers in the New Power Generation (Tony also raps). Cool guys, chatting with women, dressed to kill, guys from Prince's 'hood who've waited out their talented time and joined the crew. Like Rosie, they don't seem to be disciples of Prince, but rather members of a band, bringing their own funky cogs to a smoothly running machine. Quips Tony, "The New Power Generation is a band Prince doesn't have to babysit."

I didn't speak to Michael Bland, the new drummer who rehearses eight hours a day with the band then plays several nights a week with local jazz or blues or rock bands. I didn't have to get quotes from Bland—he speaks through the sticks and kit. His big drum sound says, "My addition to the band is a necessary addition. The drumming is real, the time changes are real. If one considers the new record to be kind of T. Rex meets the Ohio Players, my playing might have something to do with that. Whatever. I can play."

Phase Two

So then he comes out with *Around the World in a Day*. The critic's darling (All of them love you in New York, he reminded us on *1999*), the cinema heir apparent to all those rebels without causes, the pop craftsman who proudly dangled an uncut heady mix of rock licks, synth-pop, and funk-fusion before the mass public locker room called popular culture—what does he do? A "psychedelic" album, the first under the Paisley Park auspice, and according to most, the beginning of the end.

Prince has shot his load, people seemed to say. Didn't help that there were supposed to be no singles, no more touring, just this "artistic statement" to end all artistic statements. All the talk obscured the regal balladry of "Condition of the Heart" and customized brio of "Pop Life." Classics both lost in the mix. Then a movie—*Under the Cherry Moon*—and a brilliantly wobbly foray into classicism. *Parade*'s orchestrally arranged strings and horns bumped up against grinders like "Kiss" and "Girls and Boys" and "Anotherlover-holenyohead." More classics lost in the mix.

Mix, did you say? Did anyone hear that mix on BLS the other night? That rap stuff, yeah, the DJ mixed Run-D.M.C. into L.L. Cool J, then

FRANK MICELOTTA TOP PHOTO JOEL LARSON

"A GUY CAN'T BE SEEN WITH JUST ANY OLD BAG."

Prince sporting his new "typhoon" 'do.

"Everybody else went out and got drum machines and computers, so I threw mine away."

From the "Diamonds and Pearls" video.

spun right into something else hard-as-hell, taking no shorts, wearing no heels, perming no hair, not crying like any dove we've ever heard.

Questions asked. "Have you heard the new Prince album?" "Nah, but *Raising Hell* is dope. That shit is real." Nubian princes strutting their stuff, out of the ghetto and into many other neighborhoods. This is the new black music power. No androgyny, all masculine brawn.

Then the masterpiece. *Sign o' the Times*, another double-album effort, all over the place and in the pocket. Isn't this man a musician? Five minutes and 34 seconds into "Adore": Listen to the piano arpeggios, the harpsichord dipping and spinning under the multitracked voice of Prince. But who needs musicianship? *We want beats.*

Lovesexy replaces *The Black Album* as the 1988 release, introduced by "Alphabet St." a perky, danceable number that doesn't prepare you for the incredibly fluid flotation sensation of "Anna Stesia," a song with waves of raw emotions you can ride. Then *Batman*, with "Vicki Waiting," the best Stevie Wonder cut Stevie never wrote after *Hotter Than July*. Set free by the movie's utter ridiculousness, Prince's sure-footed pop craft, fueled by some up-to-the-minute studio cutting and sampling only serves to bring him to the unfinished funk of *Graffiti Bridge*. Okay movie, one perfect song ("Joy in Repetition"), and boom, critics still loved him, but the fans said no go. (This is the Daisy Age, remember.)

Questions that don't get asked. Everyone's always ready to call Prince an heir to the self-styled antics of Hendrix and Clinton and James Brown and . . . but who stood up to say that Prince's sex and race and faith debates filtered down through the minds of those hip hop nationals? The '80s belonged to a newfound black expression—who were all these black folks, black men, adopting new names, flaunting their difference, grabbing their thangs, and talking about it? They were the nephews of one Prince Rogers Nelson, whose work said, "Here I am. I'm religious, I'm spiritual, but I like to fuck." Sexuality is all I'll ever need. Marcia, I'm not saying this to be nasty, but I sincerely want to fuck the taste out of your mouth. . . . Can you relate?

SPIN: So what was Paisley Park like? Did you meet Prince?

ME: Well it's like this. Paisley Park is different during the day. A group of kids wearing Batman T-shirts are leaving as I arrive. They might have been recording gospel tracks in one of the studios. I meet Prince's people in the upstairs offices. I go to the wardrobe department and look at Prince's shoes and the mannequins his clothes are fitted on. There are doves in a cage.

I go downstairs to a side-room where Grammys and American Music Awards and gold and platinum albums line the walls. To the left there is a heavy steel door, leading to what I'm told is the vault—where master tapes are stored. There are rumored to be hundreds of unreleased Prince tracks, including, I'm told, Prince's version of Madonna's ecstatic "Like a Prayer."

Hmmm. Now let's see, how can I get in there. I don't have TNT, and I sure as hell can't ask for the key. I'm thinking this as we make our way to the soundstage downstairs.

Thoughts of pillaging Prince's proud paradise of old and new cuts diminish, though, as I enter the rehearsal studio. There he is, dressed in red from neck to toe, a halter-type vest covering his surprisingly well-built upper body and skin-tight red pants over red shoes. He's doing a handstand. Prince can walk on his hands. All right! Directly across from the band's setup, there's a slide projector. And the slide is of LaWanda Page—Aunt Esther, Fred's nemesis from the old sitcom *Sanford and Son*. Hmmm.

Finishing the song—"Elephants & Flowers" from *Graffiti Bridge*, Prince strolls over to me. We're introduced. And what is my first question to Prince? "Why Aunt Esther?" And what does he do? He laughs a long laugh and says, "She's our inspiration." Shyly, he almost whispers, "Do you need anything?"

"I haven't heard the new album yet," is my answer, trying not to sound too greedy.

"You'll hear it before you go," he says, and goes back to the band.

They run through the songs: Prince at the piano for a "Nothing Compares 2 U," the Ohio Players "Skin Tight," a funky, trimmed arrangement of "Alphabet St.," "Partyman" with snippets of "Party Up" chipped into the chorus. None of these or all of these could end up in the final show. They're just rehearsing, loosening up to tighten up as a band. The Revolution has left a muscular mark on the live performances of Prince songs, but this new band, predominantly black—notably—thrives on challenges. As Levi Seacer, Jr., bassist-turned-guitarist, and the obvious bandleader when the real leader isn't around, sums it up: "You got to learn your part. Prince can always come over and play your part."

Rehearsal's over for a few. Prince walks over again. "I'm going to play the album for you."

I look at the publicists. They shrug. Who knew? He doesn't talk to the press, he doesn't do interviews, but you're in there, go for it.

"Meet me in Studio B," he says.

Damn.

FRANK MICELOTTA

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And then I pulled out and backed it in. Great. I was starting to freak. I checked my hair. 'Fine.' My teeth. 'Okay.' My tie. 'Too late now.' As I looked down I suddenly spotted it.

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LEFT IN VEHICLE. I laughed."

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SPIN: So did he talk?
ME: Oh yeah, he talked. With no tape recorder, no pen or pencil or pad, I went into Studio B. Is this the same place I was in Saturday? There's incense burning, there're candles. Colorful cloths are draped over lights and the walls. With Prince, you get ambience.

Prince comes in, changed into black pants with a white shirt tied at the waist, carrying a CD. He directs me to the center seat behind the sleek, knobbed-down console as he puts the CD in. We get lyric sheets and the adventure begins.

Drums. Big, loud, funky drums announce "Thunder," the first cut, and we're off. The vague middle-eastern feel of the song—*Around the World in a Day* with a kickin' bass and drum—prompts Prince to tell me that he's writing a ballet for a corps of belly dancers. "I saw the Joffrey Ballet in New York, got interested, and the dancers asked me to do it," he says, leaning in close, not really talking over the music—which is loud—but blending in with it. He has a flat speaking voice that sounds like several voices at one time.

I tell him about Rosie recording the demo on Saturday.

"I love her voice. Can you imagine her voice with some kickin' rock track," he says. And I can, because soon "Daddy Pop" is playing and Rosie's voice is in there, complementing Prince's. "This song is about people who talk shit." And I can tell by his hooded eyes that he's talking about critics like me.

I recognize "Willing & Able" from the rehearsal earlier that day. "I had a dream that I was playing this on *MTV Unplugged*." The free-floating mid-tempo cut would work perfectly acoustic.

"Why don't you?" I ask him.

"I want to. I will."

Most of the songs on *Diamonds and Pearls*, written with the band, performed and recorded in the studio with the band, easily lend themselves to acoustic arrangements—smart, economical songs that deserve close inspection.

I ask him about the drum sound on the record, the most notable change from his earlier work. His answer?

"Everybody else went out and got drum machines and computers, so I threw mine away."

As the album plays, one by one, the band members stroll into the studio. Prince receives the liner notes for the album, inspects them, and passes them around, even giving them to me to check out. This guy doesn't come off as a control freak, I'm thinking, this homeboy in heels, telling me jokes about the women who come to his house when he blasts "Insatiable"—the ballad here—stripping off their clothes to the beat. Or when he talks about playing it for Patti LaBelle, stopping it mid-song before the climax, and watching her get mad. The most telling thing he said here was about the music. "If I was somebody else, writers and critics would be all up in the way the chords work and the keyboard lines. They just write off my slow jams."

Now the whole band is in attendance and the album is starting again. "Thunder" gets people moving, as "Gett Off," the funky first single did a few minutes ago. Soon Prince is spinning around, moving to the beat, air-playing every instrument on the track, leaning across me to turn the volume up and up and up.

Then, in his office upstairs, equipped with a bed, weights, a desk, couch, chairs, and a massive video console, Prince plays a Martika video for me. "I can't watch it, too emotional," he says.

The pastels and stained glass give the room a soft, otherworldly feel that is also rich with self-satisfied achievement.

Just outside the office, afterward, he asks, "Is there anything else you need?" And I shake my head.

I mean, I want to ask him a million more questions. But I don't ask anything else.

This is the beginning of phase three. The hip hoppers have started sampling his stuff—that's paying respect if ever there was paying respect. And Prince, always accused of being too into his own stuff and not paying attention to the stuff of the day (as if his day were done) has some rap stuff on his new record. It all evens out.

They called him pretentious. He was. He is. But no more pretentious than some of the hard-headed new jacks that spawned during the righteous days of late-'80s "realness," carving out their own quasi–political/racial/sexual treatises.

Prince is pretentious. Prince is bad. Prince, dare I say it, is back.

The hip hoppers have started sampling his stuff—that's paying respect if ever there was paying respect. And Prince, always accused of being too into his own stuff and not paying attention to the stuff of the day (as if his day were done) has some rap stuff on his new record. It all evens out.

Weekday hosts Ed and Dre in typical wacky pose.

DONNIE WAHLBERG IS LED OUT OF A KENTUCKY COURTROOM IN HANDcuffs, burly police deputies clearing a path through the crowd of anxious adolescents. The New Kids, it seems, have fallen on hard times: Wahlberg's hair touches his shoulders, a shaggy beard curls down around his mouth. Like an old dog responding to some faraway sound Wahlberg turns at last toward the camera. Staring solemnly from Wahlberg's chest, Malcolm X raises his fist and salutes the cameraman from *MTV News*.

Seated on the couch in the *Yo! MTV Raps* green room, Posdnuos of De La Soul can't believe what he is seeing. Eyes wide behind wire-rimmed glasses, he points a long finger at the television set. "Man, did you see that?" he asks, pointing. "Did you see that? Just another white boy trying to be black."

The studio monitor goes blank, then blinks on to Kurt Loder, shuffling papers at the MTV news desk. Loder grimaces at the camera. "Someone get me a shot of heroin," he mutters. No response. "Are we finished here or what?"

Over the course of the three years since Ted Demme, then a lowly production assistant, approached producer Peter Dougherty with an idea for a program of rap videos, *Yo! MTV Raps* has become the most important force in hip hop. *Yo!* is MTV's highest-rated show. Its audience—white, male, suburban, and between the ages of 16 and 24—is the largest segment of the rap-buying public. For this audience, *Yo!* is also an important provider of cultural clues, explicating the style and sound of urban black America. This is why Posdnuos's comment was so potentially provocative, the rare sound of a man biting down hard on the hand that feeds him.

HANK SHOCKLEE, THE RAZOR-THIN MUSICAL VISIONARY AND HIP HOP genius, fiddles with a paper clip on an abandoned desk in the offices of his S.O.U.L. label, home to the upcoming musical debut of Ed Lover and Dr. Dre, *Yo!*'s knockabout weekday hosts. "Your average R&B song uses eight or ten verses," Shocklee explains, "seventy-five or eighty words. Rap uses four or five times that number, giving you more insight into the artist, creating full characters like pop has never seen. Whites have always liked black music, that's nothing new. With rap, for the first time, the imagery of black artists is brought up to the level of black music. Video and rap go

JESSE FROHMAN

together quite naturally. *Yo!* is like a world; Ed, Dre, and Fab Five are characters just like the rappers. They've done a fantastic job."

Others are not so sure. "I think the music is dying," says Def Jam founder Rick Rubin on the phone from Los Angeles. "Rap has moved into the suburbs. Ice Cube, N.W.A, Public Enemy—I'd say 90 percent of their audience is white and suburban now. People who don't understand the music are controlling it now, ramming endless numbers of horrible groups down our throats to make a buck. Everyone wants the new Hammer, the new Vanilla Ice. I think MTV and the big music companies are responsible." Bill Stephney, the conceptual mind behind Public Enemy and Hank Shocklee's onetime partner, has a slightly different take on the matter. "Black radio never programmed the music. No one adopted the music and the culture until MTV came along, and it became the first national validated audience."

THREE DAYS LATER, ON THE PROMENADE IN Brooklyn, Fab Five Freddy is taping a Saturday show with guests EPMD. True to its album covers, the group arrives in a brand-new Mercedes with sunroof, cellular telephone, and fly girls in tow, attracting the attention of an admiring crowd. "Check it out, man," one says. "That nigger got a phone in his car!" Wearing heavy gold, matching white pants, black boots, and thick black belts unbuckled, Eric and Parish rush the video monitor after every take to check out how they did.

Fab Five Freddy lurks on the sidelines, chainsmoking between takes. Finally, it's his turn to shine. "Yo, I'm Fab Five Freddy and I'm a fly motherfucker." Cut. "Yo, Fab Five Freddy here, *Yo! MTV Raps*' motherfucker." Cut. Freddy can't seem to stop. Associate producer Moses Edinborough gets annoyed, Fab Five gets it straight. Time for the closing shot. The camera zooms in, and Parish calls a halt. "Wait a minute," he says, "you got to get the Rolex in." Eric and Parish hold matching Rolexes up to the camera, while Freddy plays with his scarf. Cameras roll. Fab Five turns to his guests, a nice easy grin. "Lambskins, man," he says. "I can't fuck with those things on." Cut. Taking in the scene on their lunch break are two aging white businessmen, neither of whom seem to approve. "I can't believe they put this shit on TV," says one.

Judged strictly on its merits, *Yo! MTV Raps* is a fine show. Video programming, the subject and result of neverending argument among Demme, Dre, Ed, Fab and Edinborough, is current and progressive, responsible for breaking any number of new acts. Where rap videos once looked like late-night local programming, L.L. Cool J, Public Enemy, and De La Soul, in particular, have found creative ways to use the form, producing videos that augment rather than just illustrate the music. Rap is young America's music of choice, and rappers, by the hundreds, are getting paid.

Yo!'s achievement is all the more remarkable when judged against the rest of MTV's programming, an increasingly uninspired mix of unlikable hosts and third-rate game shows, sunk deep in a noxious swamp of videos that slither across the screen like escapees from the Coors Light commercial reject bin. It is an odd mixture of the shoddy and the calculated, ugly to look at. Arty snippets of creative people talking about their work, some superb animation, and those cool MTV logos only point up the whistling vacuum at the heart of a once-interesting experiment. In this subterranean world, *Yo! MTV Raps* mines a vein of pure gold.

It approaches the ungrateful, then, to explore the case against *Yo!*, a case that rests largely on bits and scraps of circumstantial evidence. The year before *Yo!* came on the air saw the release of artistically innovative first albums by acts including De La Soul, Big Daddy Kane, and N.W.A. Since MTV took to airing rap, a new trio has emerged: M.C. Hammer, Vanilla Ice, and Gerardo. While *Yo!* is hardly responsible for these acts, not even their publicists would claim that music is what's selling records.

In some larger way, too, bubble-gum rap has ghettoized the rest of hip hop, forcing acts to define themselves against the mainstream. Some, like Dream Warriors and Main Source, turn arty and serious. Others, from Brand Nubian to the Geto Boys, play out street fantasies and champion violence and hate. The emphasis placed by rappers of all persuasions on image has increased; the music has steadily declined. Perhaps this process is a natural result of rap's journey into the mainstream; as the vehicle for that journey, MTV deserves its fair share of the blame.

But none of these arguments get to the heart of *Yo!*'s popularity, which is, in many ways, the most provocative aspect of its existence, the key to which Posdnuos pointed to before going on the air. For many, white and black alike, what is exciting about rap today is not simply the music but its blackness, the supercharged images that Hank Shocklee sees as essential to the form. The blackness of rap has proved to be a natural fit with the traditional thrust of rock'n'roll rebellion, the seizure of power by the disempowered outlaw. The fact that these outlaws are black compounds the thrill of opposition with the breach of racial barriers.

To Chuck D, *Yo!* is "the black CNN," a means for the voices and images of young black America to be seen and heard.

It is impossible not to analyze *Yo! MTV Raps* as race theater, an element that has always existed in rap but is now, more than ever, central to its success. To Chuck D, *Yo!* is "the black CNN," a means for the voices and images of young black America to be seen and heard. MTV senior vice president of programming Doug Herzog agrees. "If you are 17 years old and living in Des Moines, you're not going to pick up the *New York Times*. If you watch *Yo! MTV Raps*, you're going to learn a little more about race in America."

These lessons, says Fab Five Freddy, are all to the good: "Think about those kids, when they get in there and run society. They won't be as narrow-minded as their parents were. See, black people do it all the time. We know how whites live. We don't have to think about it. Motion pictures, television, they're all full of how white people live, act, how they kiss. Now things are swinging around a little bit."

This interest, says Hank Shocklee, is entirely natural. "What is white culture?" Shocklee asks. "You have Jewish kids who don't go to synagogue, kids who are Italian, Irish, Polish, German—their cultures are so far away from them, generations back. They've never even seen the places their great-grandparents came from. Kids are going to pick up on something close to their environment. And when you find out your environment doesn't have anything universal that defines your community, you're going to look somewhere else. So you might get into black culture, because you went to a high school that's 40 percent white and 60 percent black, and you grew up listening to black music. So are you lost?"

WALKING DOWN LOWER BROADWAY ON A SUNny Friday afternoon, picking out the cool white boys in Raiders caps and the occasional leather Africa medallion, one starts to wonder. Young black males have become fashion plates for millions, black and white, beepers and guns the latest cool accessories. Engagement with black culture is a step toward understanding, an expansion of knowledge. The transformation of the street into style is something else, the consumption as entertainment of what should, deep down, make us sick at heart.

The real and inescapable lesson of *Yo! MTV Raps* is that hip hop is, as it has been for years, the music of a generation of middle-class Americans, black and white. The distance from Ice Cube to the Young Black Teenagers is not half as far as it seems. Ghettos, guns, and violence against women become abstract symbols of rebellion, stripped of all meaning. It is past time to dismiss the idea that one is hearing some kind of straight reporting from the urban war zone. What you hear is dance music, and what you see is style. That ghettos do exist is no excuse for their being consumed as entertainment.

By using race to sell records, rap has taken an unwelcome turn away from the possibilities it once held out for defining a youth culture. The mere fact of rap's blackness contributes little to change: A generation has now grown up on rap, and relations between young blacks and whites are as tense as ever. Race is as important a factor in rap as it is in society at large: The only difference is that in rap songs, young urban blacks come out on top. Behind the scenes, at places like *Yo!* and in dozens of record companies and recording studios across the country, young blacks and whites work side by side in creative and interesting ways. Perhaps this relationship will one day be reflected in the music; so far it has not.

The shame in all this is that images of young blacks and whites creating music together could lead, as it did in the late '70s and early '80s in England, to the definition of a new youth culture that questions racial divisions instead of exploiting them for image and profit. Such was the high promise that *Yo! MTV Raps* held out when it first went on the air. It is a promise on which the music, and its audience, have so far failed to deliver.

Living the Life

THE SIDEWALK OUTSIDE ATHENS, GEORGIA'S 40 WATT CLUB IS PACKED with kids—mostly college-age—some sitting in small circles, some leaning against their cars, some drinking from paper-bag–covered cans of beer. It's a decidedly mixed concert crowd—skinheads, punks, fraternity guys, and a few older locals. The show costs only five dollars and no one is carded. There are no fancy set arrangements and no T-shirts for sale.

"Good evening, ladies and gentlemen," says singer-guitarist Ian MacKaye. "We are Fugazi from D.C. Enjoy yourselves. This is a nice little room."

With that the band launches into its first song. Nothing would prepare you for the barrage of emotions that follows. The crowd catches you up in an oceanic sway. You sweat, scream, shake, dance, cry. At times MacKaye stares off into nothingness, eyes almost glazed, as his guitar growls, challenges, confronts; at other points he'll jump, hop, and scream lyrics in a hypnotic rant.

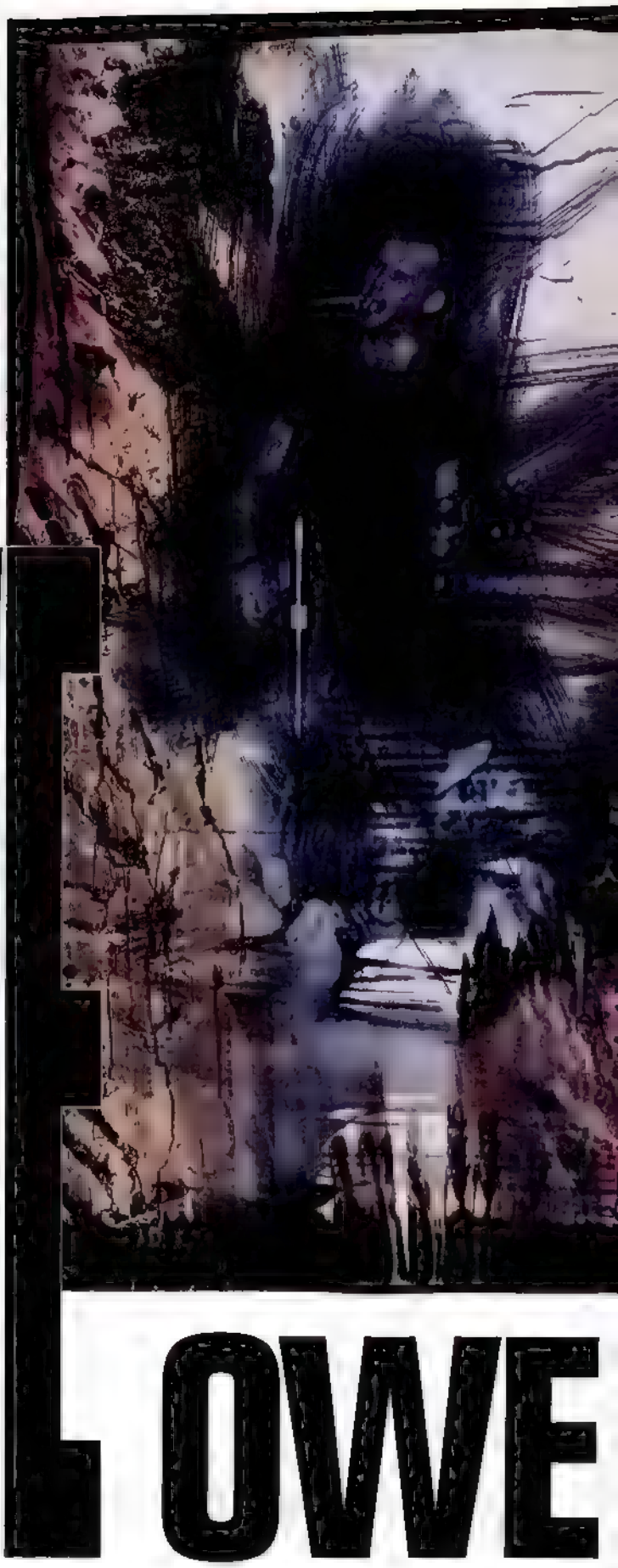
Guy Picciotto, the band's other singer-guitarist, is more sensual. He dances, cringes, falls to the floor, cuts away with layer after layer of guitar. Together MacKaye and Picciotto work off one another, their voices

Washington, D.C.'s Fugazi is passionate about musical independence—to the point of alienation, as DANIEL FIDLER found out when he traveled with the band that absolutely refuses to sell out.

intersecting and parrying in an emotional free-for-all, an intense combination of urgent anger and urgent pleading. "We have two kinds of shows," Picciotto said in one recent interview. "One that's totally confrontational, which is fine with me. And one where everyone sort of comes together. I'll play both. They're both important."

Onstage there are always people dancing in the wings, mostly local friends. Dancing is second nature; your body moving in ways you never thought it could. But the band is eager to discourage slam dancing and stage diving, two forms of expression it feels discredit the meaning behind the music.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen, please take care," MacKaye says to an excited crowd, "or people are going to get killed up here. I hate to belabor the point, but why don't you think about the fact that you are consistently kicking



WILL OWE

Photographs/Art by René Mirville

From left: Ian MacKaye, Brendan Canty (behind drums), Guy Picciotto, and Joe Lally

YOU NOTHING

the same people in the head every time. If you can't be more imaginative, well then, go home, set up a video camera, and get off on your own *MTV Raps*."

"Fuck Ian," a fan in the crowd responds. "Last time I saw the band everyone was booing him. 'Cause he was, like, 'All the big guys are beating up the little guys—don't slam.' And it was pissing everybody off." Most people, however, cheer in agreement.

"I've asked these guys," MacKaye continues, pointing at a few club hired hands, "not to come up here every time someone comes up. Now I'll ask you to be kind enough not to come up,too. There's millions and millions of bands in places where people welcome this shit, and this is just one goddamn night in your lives where you can be different. And don't kick the fucking mike stand in my mouth," he adds. "That's real bullshit."

A few in the crowd choose to ignore Ian's plea and find themselves not fighting it out with a bouncer, but dancing with Guy, receiving a gentle kiss, and being politely escorted off stage.

The band is true to itself, despite any criticism.

I Am a Patient Boy. I Wait. I Wait. I Wait.

My first mistake was to assume that Fugazi wanted to be in SPIN magazine. I had been keeping in touch with MacKaye for a number of months. When I contacted him for an individual interview previously, he told me that a full-band interview would have to be a band decision and that the outcome would depend on the mood they were all in.

"We're talking it over," MacKaye said on the phone. "But I don't know. For the most part I would never walk the extra mile for SPIN magazine. Because I think that generally it belongs to a different bunch of people that I'm not a part of. We've been putting out records for a long time now, and SPIN has never called us before. So now we're just, like, fuck it. I mean, we got last month's copy of SPIN and read it through very carefully. There was good stuff in there. But to open it up and see cigarette flap ads falling out and all the liquor ads is disgusting."

It was MacKaye, previously the singer and lyricist for the hardcore punk band Minor Threat, that first denounced drinking and drug use within the punk-music community, clearly separating the rock'n'roll–drug connection. But I remind MacKaye that Fugazi has appeared in other publications with similar ads, and that a band with such an important message shouldn't be so resentful about being ignored by SPIN.

"A lot of times magazines and newspapers have written about us without even asking," Ian responds. "But I agree that we have a message and we're talking about it. So if you're really serious, write us a letter saying what kind of story you want to do. We're playing at Columbia University this weekend. Stop by. Just introduce yourself to the band and tell them what you want to do."

Guy Picciotto is perhaps best known for his work in the punk band Rites of Spring during D.C.'s Revolution Summer in 1985, which at the time was a conscious, caring rebellion against the violent, impersonal turn the punk scene had taken. Rites of Spring expanded the boundaries of the punk rock experience, openly encouraging positive emotion on- and offstage.

"I don't think the mechanisms that exist in mass media are sensitive enough to what we want to do," Picciotto said over the phone. "That's why we don't fucking sign to a major.

"*Rolling Stone* sent us a letter because they wanted to do a story on us, and we said no. I see SPIN as definitely the lesser of two evils. But I look at SPIN, and it doesn't speak to me. And I agree that there are good things in it—I am happy that they cover black music, and I like the AIDS coverage. But I pick up a copy of SPIN, and my band sitting anywhere inside of it makes me feel uncomfortable. We do fanzine interviews to support underground music, but SPIN doesn't cover that anymore. So if you're asking me if I want this to exist, I tell you I don't."

I tell Picciotto of the alternative bands SPIN has covered and how a Fugazi article might encourage more such coverage. "That's just like making a video," he responds. "People say that if you can get one goddamn video on MTV, what a victory that would be. People are going to want you to help make MTV better. And sometimes you do see a good video on there, and you say, goddamn, that was not a waste of my time. But ultimately it's like a piss in the ocean. And when you work so hard to maintain something, you have to be careful. When we went to England, we did all these interviews and were totally misrepresented. So if what you're telling me is that this story is going to happen, then all I can say is do a fucking good job."

"People say that if you can get one video on MTV, what a victory that would be. And sometimes you do see a good video on there. But ultimately it's like a piss in the ocean."

Joe Lally, Fugazi's bass player, and I had it out for over 45 minutes, arguing back and forth. After I exhausted every last possible point, he said, "Basically the answer I can give you now is no. This is all pretty new to me. I mean, I'm twenty-seven and I still don't feel like I've accomplished anything."

After I made a few threats about jumping out the SPIN editorial window, Lally had some advice for me: "Hey, calm down. Drink some lemonade. It all sounds great, but I'm just not used to it. I'm sure we'll be talking before Columbia, so come and see us and maybe we'll have an answer."

I arrived at the Columbia University show that weekend as Ian was setting up onstage.

"I heard you and Joe had a little love chat," he said, smiling. "And like I said, it has nothing to with you as a person. And fuck, we've never spent this much time debating over a magazine before. Things are tense, this isn't helping. But even if we do say no, we can't stop someone from writing about us. You've already got some great stuff you can use. It's like, did you ever see those "THIS IS NOT A FUGAZI T-SHIRT" T-shirts? I was pissed off when I first heard about that. But now I think it's brilliant, fucking brilliant. That guy just went and did it on his own and made a point. You should think about it."

This Is Not a Fugazi Article

The most important thing about Fugazi is the music. Forget the facts. Forget the figures. While a lot of new music seems manufactured, empty, and devoid of any social consciousness, Fugazi is an essential change. Musically the band has taken the raw elements of rock, hardcore, funk, heavy metal, and reggae and mixed them together with a radical punk twist. Lyrically, MacKaye and Picciotto deal with everyday subjects—such as "patience," "caring about the world you live in," "why a girl has to live in fear of her gender," racism, and drug abuse—in a brutally honest way. Each song is delivered with the passion, urgency, and energy that made punk rock a viable musical expression.

"Sometime down in Washington," MacKaye said at a recent show, "there was a war, it was on television, and it was pretty cool and had a cool name. I think it was, Operation . . . "

"Happy Meal," Picciotto offered.

"Right. Operation Happy Meal. And it was really cool and no one got hurt. Actually, I think a hundred people stubbed their toes, and I remember the war was with someone who is not like us. And this is a song about that. It's called 'Keep Your Eyes Open.' "

While clearly there are other socially aware bands, none live the life like Fugazi do. The band just isn't concerned with making money. Since its formation back in 1987, Fugazi has operated strictly on its own terms, becoming one of the most popular alternative rock bands in the United States and Europe, completely independent of the major music industry. It puts out records on MacKaye's Dischord record label for amazingly low prices—six-dollar cassettes and nine-dollar CDs—refusing to sell merchandise or market itself in any way. Most of the band's profits from local shows go to charity. Fugazi also won't play a show that isn't open to all ages or one that carries a ticket price of over five dollars.

"There's a lot of reasons for that," MacKaye explains. "One is that we don't particularly want to pay more than five dollars to see a band. I always feel shitty when I have to lay out a lot of dough, because then I want that band to entertain my ass. And that's the other side. For five bucks we could suck. Because we are human and we do suck sometimes.

"Any band can have five-dollar shows," MacKaye says, defensively. "People say, 'Gosh, you're able to do that; you're able to pull it off.' The fact is, though, we didn't play N.Y.C. for a year because we couldn't find a club that would

continued on page 101

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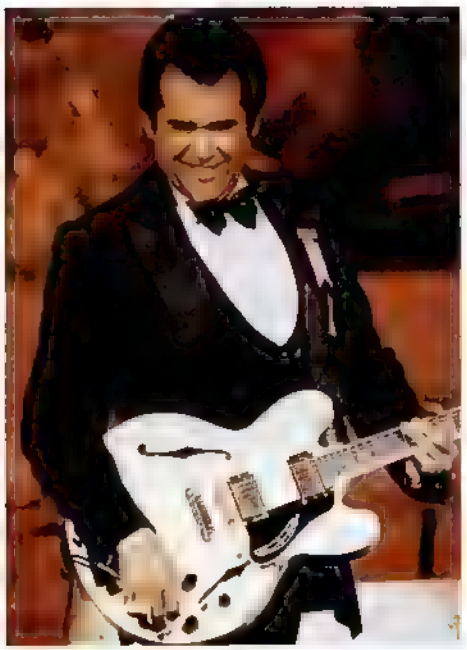
WAYNE'S WORLD

JIM GREER takes flight—literally—with the master of Vegas glitz, a rock'n'roll idol for our times. And they call him Wayne Newton.

Wayne Newton is, for lack of a better word, God. The guy's, like, 19 feet tall—the first celebrity I've met who's actually bigger than life. Most of them are tiny: little pop culture Napoléons with disproportionate egos. Not Wayne. Sitting in his private jet, half-dazed, more than confused, I was awakened from my half-sleep by a shadow filling the front of the cabin. Wayne. His chest is infinite. When Wayne shakes your hand you involuntarily exclaim, "Eek!" He has big brown hands that envelop yours as easily as clouds swallow the moon.



Larger than life itself: Wayne Newton.

Dozing in that plane, on the hot Las Vegas tarmac, waiting to fly to Los Angeles for Wayne's scheduled *Arsenio Hall Show* appearance, I realized that I had accidently stumbled across the hidden motor of America, the place where all lines meet. In Wayne Newton, staring intently at what I took to be a backgammon board, across the table from his fiancée—she used to be the girl on *The A-Team*—I had found that measured combination of size, strength, purity of ambition, vulgarity, and shrewdness that characterizes the best of our fair land's best. The notion struck me with the force of an epiphany, and then I fell asleep.

WE WERE SOMEWHERE AROUND BARSTOW ON THE EDGE OF THE DESert when the drugs began to take hold. Thank God for Sudafed—when you've got a head cold, even a short hop to L.A.

PHOTO BY PAUL N. KAMMET

to visit Arsenio can be hell without something to relieve the congestion. Even when a limo picks you up at the airport and takes you straight to the studio.

Arsenio Hall's set is a lot smaller in real life than on TV, but I guess that's true of just about anything. Arsenio and Wayne appeared to be good friends, or maybe that's just how everyone in Hollywood acts, and there was even a big fruit basket in Wayne's dressing room from Eddie Murphy. I eyed the fruit basket champagne enviously, but with my cold and all, decided to stick with Coke. Besides, I'd read somewhere that Sudafed is chemically similar to Ecstasy, and I was waiting for the good part to kick in.

Strange things happen to Wayne. Halfway through the taping of this show, a couple of kids in the studio audience threw a bucket of some weird substance onto the floor. Whatever it was, it reacted to heat and pressure with a loud pop, like a subdued firecracker, so that the show had to be stopped for almost an hour while crew members stomped around the floor trying to pop everything that could be popped. Considering that the main guest that night was sitcom-actor Bronson Pinchot, I guess things could have been worse.

Anyway, Wayne finally got to go on and tell his story about punching out Johnny Carson (he and Johnny don't get along too well it seems, going way back, for a number of reasons, all of which I'm sure are real interesting), and then they pulled me out of the audience and put us in the limo to the airport for the trip back to Vegas. I was completely exhausted, the Sudafed hadn't worked at all, and Wayne still had a show to do.

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING: WHY SHOULD you care about this man, no matter how Bunyanesque his stature? Why care about this Vegas lounge act? What does Wayne Newton have to do with rock'n'roll? Let me tell you, kiddies, you could learn a lot from him—a lot more than any collegiate geeks in faded flannel will ever be able to tell you. This is the secret: Wayne Newton hoards in his gilded soul more of the untainted essence of whatever it is "rock" ever meant to you and yours than anyone since Elvis Presley, who is dead and therefore irrelevant. Rock'n'roll, an inherently American institution, harbors in its heart an untainted flamboyance—a kind of aggressive innocence—sadly missing in today's version.

Which leaves us with Wayne. More specifically, with the principles of entertainment the rock world has left behind in favor of "art," or at least the debased notion of art adopted by those who'd have you think Bon Jovi is somehow inherently worth less than, say, Hüsker Dü, when the truth is that, in the long view, both are equally mediocre.

The guy was friends with Elvis. He's a black belt in karate. He sued a major network for libel and won, like, a zillion dollars. He's a competent pilot and likes to fly helicopters around for fun. His house is modeled after Tara in *Gone With the Wind*. He's got penguins and flamingos in his backyard. He collects cars, some of which are worth millions of dollars. He's part or mostly or some American Indian. He has ESP. He breeds horses—when he has time, he likes to assist in their birth—and is himself an accomplished rider. He's going to marry the girl from *The A-Team*. What more do you need to know?

SPIN: Who is Wayne Newton?
Newton: For that matter, what is a Wayne Newton?
SPIN: All right, then, what is a Wayne Newton, how much does one cost, and where can you buy one?
Newton: You know, my contemporaries for all practical purposes in what I do are about twenty years my senior. I'm really a throwback to some other generation.
SPIN: And after you, whither Vegas? Who's going to fill Wayne's loafers?
Newton: There's nobody coming now.
SPIN: Maybe this is misplaced nostalgia on my part, but it seems that show business today is missing the element of glamour that was associated with it in the '50s and '60s.
Newton: You've made an excellent point.
SPIN: Yeah, sure. I mean, you Sammy Davis, Jr. . . .
Newton: Style.
SPIN: Style, that's it. There's sort of an ethic of antistyle in rock music. You know, everybody wants to be an artist. No one wants to be an entertainer. And as a result, they all suck.
Newton: I think that today's answer to the "artist" is Michael Jackson. And look at his background—from the time he was so high, all he's ever done is walk out on stage. And then there's Donny Osmond, because he's a consummate talent and a consummate performer when he wants to be. I think right now he's falling back to what he thinks he should be instead of being what he is.
SPIN: Yeah, he's sort of trying to—
Newton: —do that George Michael thing?

In Wayne Newton I had found that measured combination of size, strength, purity of ambition, vulgarity, and shrewdness that characterizes the best of our fair land's best.

IF WAYNE IS NOT EXACTLY A CONCEPT BY WHICH WE measure our pain, his show is nevertheless the standard by which I will henceforth judge each future concert of any genre. I'm not talking about camp, or kitsch, or any of that weak shit. I'm talking about full-blooded American entertainment. In short, I'm talking about lasers.

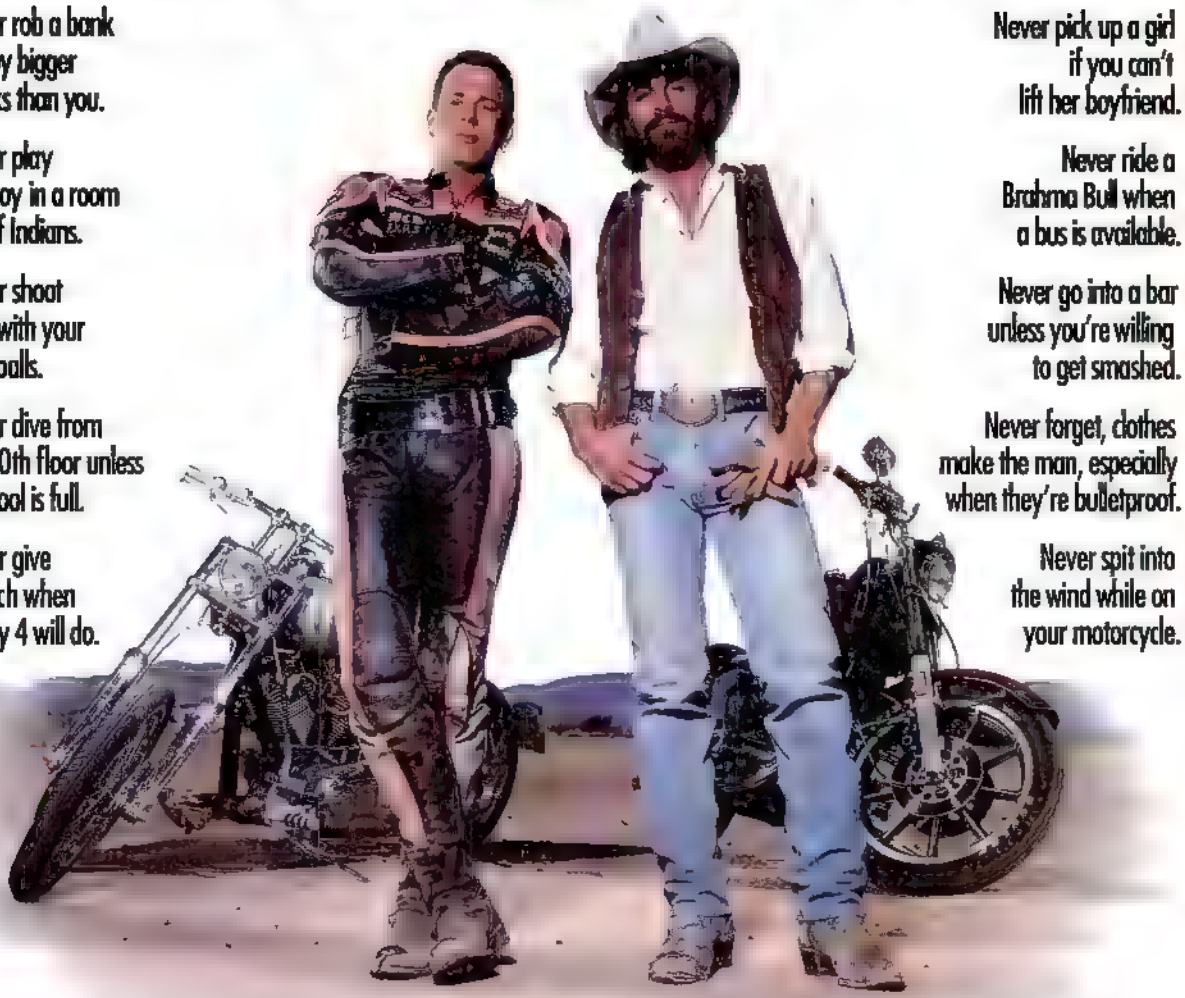
In Wayne's show, lasers make clouds, and a curtain of rain, and Wayne parts the curtain of rain with his bejewelled hand right before he gets back in the spaceship that takes him to Entertainment Heaven, at the end of the show. Pacing and dynamics and comic timing are the three mistresses of Wayne's musical world, and whether or not he's a good singer (he is) or his band is any good (it is) or whether the song selection is any good (it isn't) really doesn't matter as long as you're having a good time (you are). Of course, they have this policy in the Hilton Showroom of bringing two drinks every time you order one, which has resulted in a slight fogginess, memory-wise, on my part concerning the latter portion of the show. So in other words, I'm not entirely sure Wayne went up in a spaceship at the end of the show, but I'm quite sure he came down in one at the beginning of it, and anyway you get the point.

SPIN: What do you think of rap music?
Newton: Oh, I listen to it. My daughter's fourteen, as you know, so I hear it. I don't have an aversion to listening to rap, it's just the sameness and the monotonous approach. You can leave on the station my daughter listens to for four hours and never hear the beat change.
SPIN: What was the last rock concert you went to?
Newton: Oh, my God. I don't think I've ever been to a rock concert. It had nothing to do with desire, it's just that I've been working my whole life. There's many times I'd have loved to have gone but I couldn't.
SPIN: So what's with all this acting you've been doing lately?
Newton: Well, I enjoy it immensely. I think it's because I've spent my whole life being Wayne Newton. And a lot of people don't understand when I say that. My trumpet player one night said, 'Well, try being me for a while.'
SPIN: Even being Wayne Newton can be some job.
Newton: Absolutely. Because if I want to lay around nude with my foot in a bucket of shit at home and nobody sees that, that's fine. But I can't do that out here. But that's why it's really nice to take a character and live in their body for a while.
SPIN: Is that why you always play such evil people?
Newton: I get all my hostilities out and I don't go to jail for it.
SPIN: Tell me about your ESP abilities.
Newton: Well, that's been blown a little out of proportion. I just get feelings sometimes, that I've been places before, or that I know what's going to happen. And they always turn out true.
SPIN: So, for instance, could you tell me if this girl I like is going to fall in love with me or not?
Newton: No, but if I saw you together I'd know in a second whether it would work out. Just by looking.
SPIN: But you'll at least autograph a copy of your autobiography for her?
Newton: Sure, of course. Now what can I write that will really get you in trouble?

PHOTO BY PAUL N. KAMMET

HARLEY & MARLBORO'S RULES OF THE ROAD

1. Never rob a bank run by bigger crooks than you.
2. Never play cowboy in a room full of Indians.
3. Never shoot pool with your own balls.
4. Never dive from the 20th floor unless the pool is full.
5. Never give an inch when a 2 by 4 will do.
6. Never pick up a girl if you can't lift her boyfriend.
7. Never ride a Brahma Bull when a bus is available.
8. Never go into a bar unless you're willing to get smashed.
9. Never forget, clothes make the man, especially when they're bulletproof.
10. Never spit into the wind while on your motorcycle.



MICKEY ROURKE · DON JOHNSON

HARLEY DAVIDSON AND THE MARLBORO MAN

METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER Presents A KRISTAIR/LAREDO Production A SIMON WINCER Film MICKEY ROURKE DON JOHNSON "HARLEY DAVIDSON AND THE MARLBORO MAN" CHELSEA FIELD TOM SIZEMORE VANESSA WILLIAMS
Executive Designer RICHARD SHISSLER Music by BASIL POLEDOURIS Production Designer PAUL PETERS Director of Photography DAVID EGGBY A.C.S. Written by DON MICHAEL PAUL Produced by JERE HENSHAW Directed by SIMON WINCER

ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK ALBUM ON MERCURY RECORDS, CASSETTES AND COMPACT DISCS. MARKETED BY POLYGRAM RECORDS.

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NIGGAZ4DINNER

N.W.A's new album, *Niggaz4Life*, sets a new record for gansta-rap violence. Can they walk it like they talk it, or are they just a joke? Over dinner at New York's Russian Tea Room they nearly have MARK BLACKWELL in stitches.

Nobody goes for all that "bitch-nigga-ho" gangsta rap stuff, it's just too gross. Yeah, right, just like nobody goes to sex shops, strip joints, or porn movie houses. That's why there's one on every other corner. And the idea of somebody getting violently killed is revolting. That's why you can't get tickets to *Terminator 2*, and have to see *Truth or Dare* again. Just remember to close your eyes during the Evian bottle scene.

The members of N.W.A (Niggas With Attitude)—Eazy-E, Dr. Dre, M.C. Ren, and D.J. Yella—know what sells and they know how to sell it. That's why an album that couldn't be played on the radio even if hell froze over rockets to No. 1 on the pop charts in just two weeks. They're not stupid, even though you may think so by the time you finish this article. They're businessmen. And I'd much rather sit next to Eazy-E on a plane than some sweaty fat guy who sells insurance. You may not agree with Eazy's ideas. He doesn't care. He's making millions and he's probably happier than you are. So shut up.

I'm not justifying murder, misogyny, rape, robbery, or any of the other stuff N.W.A raps about. But they have every right to rap about it, and plenty of people obviously love it. I actually like N.W.A a lot, but I think the new album *Niggaz4Life* wears thin pretty fast. The main problem is that the old "niggas" and "bitches" thing—whether offensive or not—is getting a little tired. The record's good for some clever raps and a laugh or two, though, and as usual, Dre and Yella's production is peerless.

I arrive to meet N.W.A for our dinner engagement at New York's elegant Russian Tea Room. "I'm afraid you'll have to wait for your table," the maitre d' apologizes. "We have your reservations, but several of the gentlemen are *quite* large, so you'll need more room." When he leads me to the group I realize he's speaking of N.W.A's four Mack truck–size bodyguards. The following is a sampling of our initial conversation as we wait upstairs with drinks and appetizers:

"What is this?" Ren asks. "They call this shit appetizers?"

"I'll try some of these carrot sticks," Yella offers. "Nah! Damn, this shit smell *weird*!"

"They better have some steak or something," Ren declares.

"Damn, man, you gonna eat that?" Dre asks me, "What is that?"

I hazard a guess that the thing on my fork is some kind of eel.

"I got an electric eel you can taste!" Dre howls.

"You know who you look like?" Dre asks me with a grin. "You look like Donny Osmond."

When Chef Paul Ingenito's famous borscht arrives, Yella braves a spoonful.

"It's awright," he admits. "Tastes like some weak-ass

A toast to good fortune, *from left*: D.J. Yella, Dr. Dre, the author, M.C. Ren, and Eazy-E.

beef stew or something."

By the time our table's ready Eazy has found something he likes—a breaded meat thing called a peroshki. Yella is in the middle of spilling his third gin and pineapple juice down the front of his shirt, and the others are doubling over in laughter. Getting up from the table Yella falls on the floor. "Damn, man, you makin' us look bad!" Eazy howls. Yella grins. We enter the main dining room and become the center of attention for the rest of the night. Dinner is served.

SPIN: If you had to state an occupation what would it be? Would you consider yourself a "professional nigga"?

Eazy: Yeah. [*Laughter.*] Professional nigga. That's okay.

Ren: Everybody that's black's a professional nigga. And anybody else that survive all the world's bullshit.

Dre: We don't say nigga as a racial thing. It's everyday language. It don't mean black. Anybody can be a muthafuckin' nigga.

Ren: It's on our records so much it don't faze muthafuckas anymore. It's like homeboy: "Yo, nigga, what's up?" You got nine white muthafuckas after you with bats and guns yelling, "Nigger!" Now that's different.

Dre: Depends on how you say it. Say it wrong, we fuck you up.

SPIN: Who's buying your record?

Eazy: Everybody. Same ones that listen to metal. Guns N' Roses and Metallica and shit like that. People like to hear the real shit. The "I don't give a fuck" attitude.

Dre: Everybody else doing this peace shit. Nobody wants to listen to that.

SPIN: Like M.C. Hammer?

Eazy: Nah, that's different.

SPIN: So you respect him?

Dre: I respect him like a muthafucka. He sold ten million records.

Eazy: He's doin' his thang. We're doin' our thang. Underground hardcore hip hop rap shit.

SPIN: How'd it feel to go No. 1?

Eazy: [*Singing à la EMF*] It's *un-be-liev-a-ble!* [*Laughter.*] Thought it could never be done.

SPIN: Was your contribution to the Republican Senatorial Inner Circle and luncheon with George Bush just a brilliant publicity stunt?

Eazy: You know it! Everybody was dumb to that fact. Like Spike Lee, little bastard. He thought I was selling out or something. I paid $2,500 for a million dollars worth of publicity! I'm not a Republican or a Democrat. I don't give a fuck. I don't even vote.

SPIN: And you asked [Los Angeles Police Department brutality victim] Rodney King to appear on a new version of "Fuck tha Police"?

Eazy: [*Laughing*] Rodney King's all fucked up, man! He going out with transvestites now. He don't know what the fuck's going on! He don't know his ass from a hole in the ground! [*Laughter.*]

Ren: Rodney the king! [*Laughter.*]

Dre: He thought he was a relative of Martin Luther!

Ren: Muthafuckas criticized us when we did "Fuck tha Police," but they shut the fuck up now.

Dre: Rodney King didn't help us. The muthafucka that videotaped it helped us.

Eazy: Without him Rodney King wouldn't be goddamn shit! Rodney King so fucked up he wouldn't know his own goddamn name! [*Laughing hysterically*] You give Rodney King a thousand dollars, he be happy!

SPIN: So he's not doing the song?

Eazy: Nah, he has to go through the whitewash. You know, lawyers and that whole. . . . Man! Y'all can't be fuckin' with my food, man, what's happenin'?! Damn!

Yella: [*Yelling from the next table over*] Hey! You got a sister named Marsha!?

SPIN: What?

Yella: You look like muthafuckin' Greg Brady sittin' down there! [*Laughter.*]

Eazy: Can I have some more bread with the veal shit in it?

Waiter: The thing I gave you thirteen thousand of already?

Eazy: Yeah.

Dre: This place is wack! Muthafuckas in these monkey suits and shit. Muthafuckas ain't being real.

Eazy: I like this bullshit per . . . peroshki . . . shit, but other than that . . .

SPIN: What are your goals?

Yella: [*Singing from the next table*] *The Bra-dy Bunch! The Brady Bunch!* [*Laughter.*]

Eazy: To make money.

Ren: I wanna be a billionaire.

SPIN: What'll you do with it?

Eazy: I dunno. Blow it on bullshit.

Ren: Save it, invest it, have fun.

Eazy: I'd like to buy eternal life.

SPIN: What about Yella? What's he doing way over there?

Ren: He ain't gonna say shit anyway.

Dre: Yella wanna run a beauty parlor chain across the country. [*Laughter.*] He wanna sell vibrators and shit!

Eazy: Blow-up dolls and edible panties. All that freaky stuff. . . .

Yella: [*Returning to table*] Fuck all you pussy eaters!

SPIN: What are your goals?

Yella: A house in Memphis, money in the bank, and pussy!

SPIN: Is that all?

Yella: *Naaaaaaaah.* Power!

SPIN: What does power bring?

Yella: Pussy! [*Laughter.*] Money and pussy! Anything beside that's irrelevant!

SPIN: What did you think of the movie *Boyz N the Hood*?

Eazy: It sucks. It reminds me of a Monday afterschool special with cussin'. They just using Ice Cube's name to sell the movie, too. He ain't the main star.

Dre: That shit is wack!

Ren: Ice Cube can suck my dick.

Eazy: The brother's cool. He's doing his own thang. We not gonna down him and everything.

Ren: He can still suck my dick.

SPIN: Dre, there's a rumor that you might work with Cube again.

Dre: Nah, that's wack. That's false.

Eazy: Don't lie, man.

SPIN: So it's true?

Dre: Nah, nah.

Eazy: I think DJ Speed is producing his record. [*Laughter.*]

SPIN: What's the worst thing you've ever done?

Eazy: You gettin' personal, man.

SPIN: I'm just wondering if your raps are written from experience.

Dre: The shit happens everyday.

SPIN: From *your* experience?

Eazy: A lot of it. Not all *mine*. I dunno.

SPIN: Where do the songs about killing bitches come from?

EZEL MUSTAFA

MERRY
GO
ROUND
ASHION MATTERS
MEN AND WOMEN
MACHINE

MERRY GO ROUND

WHERE FASHION MATTERS • FOR MEN AND WOMEN

Presents the

TEN BEST ALBUMS of ALL TIME

The Top Ten Albums Of All Time? Whew! That's a hard one. There are a ton of records out there. That's why Merry Go Round and SPIN thought it would be best to let *you* decide what the Top Ten would be. Sure it's SPIN's business to write about and evaluate music (*somebody* has to do it, so it might as well be us) but there's a point where we have to draw the line. No musical "expert" knows *everything* about music, no matter what they try to tell you. Everyone has their own opinions. Including you. That's the beauty of life, and that's the beauty of rock and roll.

It's pretty generous of Merry Go Round and SPIN to ask you to vote for the Top Ten Albums rather than to slap our opinions down and ask you to believe them. Two heads are better than one, and thousands of heads are better than two. And we received thousands of responses, so tallying them up was almost as hard as deciding the Top Ten ourselves. But here are the Readers' Choice Top Ten Albums of All Time, as decided upon by *you*, the readers of SPIN. Not a bad selection, we must say. You might not agree with all of them, but hey, don't look at us. You can't complain if you didn't vote. And if you did vote, but your favorites aren't represented here, well, tough luck. That's the price you pay for living in a musical democracy. That's another good thing about letting you guys decide. We don't have to take the blame for the results.

MERRY
GO
EXHAUST
ROUND
WHERE FASHION
FOR MEN AND WOMEN
EXHAUST
ORIGINAL

SH

ed as "the only band that matters"
ring a wide range of musical
whole, the album made the

Guns 'N' Roses

APPETITE FOR DESTRUCTION

The 1987 record that was the genesis of the media hype that still exists today. With hits like "Welcome To The Jungle" and "Sweet Child O' Mine," Guns N' Roses took over the charts and the tabloids with their own special band of straight forward rock quality and behind the scenes controversy.

Prince and the Revolution

PURPLE RAIN

This soundtrack to the reclusive purple clad maniac's 1984 movie of the same name stayed at Number One on the charts for 21 straight weeks. A mixture of sexy ballads, gutsy Hendrix-like guitar rock, and everything in between, this is Prince at his very best. Includes the Number One songs "When Doves Cry" and "Let's Go Crazy."

Pink Floyd

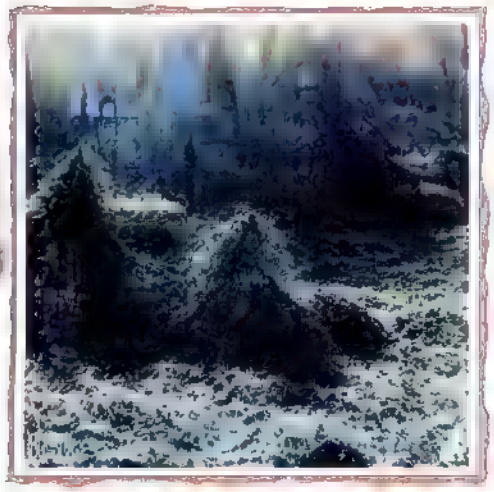
DARK SIDE OF THE MOON

From one of the most original, progressive, and theatrical bands of the 60s and 70s came this classic release in 1973. The album stayed on the charts for 741 (yes, 741) consecutive weeks, finally falling off in 1988.

Led Zeppelin

LED ZEPPELIN IV

Including the all time guitar-rock super mega-classic "Stairway To Heaven," this 1971 album, known as "Led Zeppelin IV," also features the hits "Black Dog" and "Rock and Roll." An important work for one of the most widely influential and imitated bands in rock and roll.



R.E.M.

MURMUR

The 1983 debut long player from the incredible Athens, Georgia quartet set the tone of what came to be known generally as "college music" for the remainder of the 80s. Now the well seasoned band is defining pop for the 90s, but this fledgling effort remains a masterpiece.

Jimi Hendrix

ARE YOU EXPERIENCED?

The incredible 1967 debut album from the man who revolutionized the way the world looked at (and heard) the electric guitar. Includes the classics "Hey Joe," "Purple Haze," and "The Wind Cries Mary."

LONDON CALLING

This 1979 double album from what was then widely hail... was a definitive classic from the day of it's release. Cove... territory, yet holding together as a brilliant rock and roll... already legendary Clash an institution.

THE BEATLES

THE BEATLES

This 1968 release from the British band that dominated rock and roll in the mid to late 60s is a classic two disc set of eclectic music, which was better known as "The White Album." Features such Fab Four gems as "Back in the U.S.S.R.," "Birthday," "Revolution 1," and "Helter Skelter."

U2

THE JOSHUA TREE

This sixth album by Dublin, Ireland's favorite musical sons sent the band in 1987 from fringe success to superstardom, with megahits like "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For" and "With Or Without You." U2's uniquely passionate brand of atmospheric and ethereal rock is showcased here with powerful style and grace.

SEX PISTOLS

NEVER MIND THE BOLLOCKS HERE'S THE SEX PISTOLS

These days any new g... with an attitude (Guns... Roses, De La Soul, N W... etc.) is bound to be cal... "the new Sex Pistols" by t... critics. Well these guys ar... the original rebels, and their no-holds-barred irreverent punk style make... this, their only real studio album, an all time favorite... even after almost 15 year...

MERRY
GO
ROUND
FRESH FASHION MATTERS
FOR MEN AND WOMEN
DAMAGE

Eazy: I've seen a lot of shit. I seen a ho get chopped up. Eyes took out. Legs cut up.
SPIN: You ever done anything like that?
Eazy: I wouldn't say I've done it, hell no. But I'd like to.
SPIN: Seriously?
Eazy: Yeah. Just to see how it is. I wanna get somebody and cut they shit all up and grind it up like hamburger meat and shit.
Ren: Makin' hamburgers!
Eazy: So they could never find a trace.
SPIN: Be serious.
Eazy: I'm serious! Fry that shit up and give it to somebody to eat, like a dog or something.
SPIN: Is crime a good thing?
Yella: It's a everyday thang.
SPIN: Ever been arrested?
Yella: Yeah.
Eazy: Ask me that, man. I been arrested a gang of times. This question ain't for Yella.
Yella: I stole a car.
Eazy: *I* been arrested for everything. Drugs, assaults, stealing, all kind of shit.
SPIN: Were you from a poor family?
Eazy: Hell, no! But my family made me work for whatever I wanted. I did what I had to do. I still got it in me, too. You leave some money lying around, you can goddamn bet I'll take it. I don't feel shit.
Yella: You leave a tip, it's gone.
SPIN: Ever shot anybody?
Eazy: Of course. It's nothin'. It's like shootin' a bird with a BB gun. I don't feel bad. No conscience.
SPIN: Is that bullshit?
Eazy: It ain't bullshit.
SPIN: If I pissed you off you wouldn't feel bad about shooting me right now?
Eazy: You gotta piss me off enough to make me wanna fuck you up.
SPIN: And you'd shoot me?
Eazy: And show no shame.
Ren: Man, hit this muthafucka with a bottle! Damn!
SPIN: [*Nervous laugh.*]
Ren: You want me to hit you with this glass? I hit you if you want me to!
SPIN: It'd be nice for publicity. Not now though. Maybe later.
Ren: I'll hit you.
Yella: Depends on what you do!
Ren: I'll grab you like this! [*Grabs my neck.*] And take your shit like this! [*Grabs my recorder.*]
Eazy: Wait, wait, wait!
Dre: Don't fuck his shit up!
Eazy: Wait! Here go a perfect example. Homegirl from *Pump It Up*? She pissed Dre off . . .
Dre: Nah, man, check it out. . . .
SPIN: Dee Barnes? She's suing you now, right?
Dre: Nah, man.
Eazy: If the bitch can sue, he should just kill her. It's cheaper. [*Laughter.*]
SPIN: What did you do?
Dre: Nuttin', man.
Eazy: You lying! You beat the shit out of her!
Dre: I was drunk.
Eazy: I seen everything. He grabbed the bitch by the little hair that she had. Threw the bitch to the bathroom door. Pow!! She hit her head. He just start stompin' on the bitch. I was like, "Stop, man! Stop!" [*In high female voice*] "No, don't! No, don't!" He wouldn't stop! [*Laughter.*] Threw the bitch down a flight of stairs! [*Makes falling-downstairs noise.*] Bitch didn't even know her name! She was fucked up worse than Rodney King! [*Laughter.*]
Dre: I didn't do nuttin' man. He did it. I didn't do shit.
SPIN: Is there a limit to what you'd say or do?
Eazy: Nah, we don't give a fuck.
SPIN: Is that the gimmick?
Eazy: No gimmick. It's real. I don't give a fuck about nuttin'.
SPIN: But is it just one trick? Niggas, bitches, hoes, cops, and that's it?
Eazy: Nah. Whatever goes on we gonna talk about it. Like underground reporters.
Dre: Puts the bread on the table.
Eazy: Brings home the bacon.
Dre: That's the bottom muthafuckin' line.
SPIN: If you could change anything in the world what would it be?
Eazy: I'd paint the White House black.
SPIN: What about you, Yella?
Yella: Shit! I'm not too thinkin' right now.
Eazy: He's not too thinkin' right now! [*Laughter.*]
Yella: Taxes and all that shit. I hate paying taxes.
SPIN: What about you, Ren?
Ren: I'd make everybody give me they money.
Eazy: I'd be like Jerry Lewis and have a telethon.
SPIN: For what?
Eazy: For me to get all the goddamn money!
SPIN: And you, Dre?
Dre: I'd fix it so I could get BET [Black Entertainment Television] at my pad. [*Laughter.*]
SPIN: Beyond that.
Dre: That's it. I don't get BET.
SPIN: You all right, Yella?
Ren: Look at him! [*Yella knocks over his drink.*]
Eazy: Do he look all right? [*Laughter.*]
SPIN: I met this girl last night . . .
Eazy: Did you fuck her?
SPIN: No, but . . .
Eazy: Well, I don't wanna hear about it. [*Laughter.*]
SPIN: She's a teacher, and she said the only way to get her twelve-year-olds to write is to let them transcribe stuff like N.W.A. They ask her things like, "How do you spell *fuck*?" and "What's a ho?"
Eazy: That's good! Teach the little bastards how to do they ABCs in rap form, the muthafuckas'll learn faster.
Dre: [*Rapping and playing wine glasses with a spoon.*] "A . . . B . . . muthafuckin' C . . . " [*Laughter.*]
Eazy: They'll remember shit like that! Like all these kids learn about Africa. Who the fuck wanna learn about Africa?
Ren: I just want them to go buy the record. Fuck 'em.
Dre: When they growin' up they look at cartoons all day. Muthafuckas gettin' shot and shit.
Eazy: Damn cartoons, man.
SPIN: You mean like when the coyote falls a hundred thousand feet off a cliff but he's okay?
Eazy: Damn right. Little kid fall a hundred thousand feet he's dead as a muthafuckin' doorknob.
SPIN: So you don't feel responsible for the kids that look up to you?

"Boyz N the Hood reminds me of a Monday after-school special with cussin'. They just using Ice Cube's name to sell the movie."

continued on page 101

Left to right: DJ Richie Rich, MC Serch, and Prime Minister Pete Nice.

Pop goes the 'bass

As 3rd Bass's pop-rap dis climbs the charts, JOAN MORGAN has a dialogue with the derelicts.

RACIAL POLARIZATION IN RAP MUSIC was a nonissue in the early '80s. Hip hop culture was ghetto and any Lee-wearing, Gazelle-clad, ballistic-dropping white boy was going to be considered "down by law" because it meant he'd paid the high price of admission. So if 3rd Bass had busted on the scene with the funky, fiery intensity of 1989's *The Cactus Album*, its legitimacy might also have been a nonissue. But those were simpler times. This is the age of the culture vultures, where MTV lays out the ghetto's jewels like carrion for beeper-carrying suburbanites to toss around and discard like yesterday's K-Swisses—while commercialization and industry greed threaten real rap's perpetuation. Although the duo finds cultural possessiveness understandable, neither is about to step from what he deems as his inarguable right to the music. And the demands can get deep, like it did when hellfire activist Sister Souljah rallied her young, black, and proud audience to cries of "3rd Bass ain't down!" at last year's Malcolm X Conference.

"I respect her for trying to uplift our youth," says MC Serch. "But unfortunately, she's looking at the polarization of the music. I didn't see Souljah in the Latin Quarters or the Rooftop. I could teach her a thing or two about hip hop. I know a thing or two about the culture, about where the music comes from and where it's going. We were so involved in the community that people never asked why. When I stepped to the LQ I was in there; when I was in the S-n-S at six in the morning throwing Cilo dice I was in there. I don't think we have jack shit to prove."

Even in this hostile atmosphere, 3rd Bass has managed to do us lovely. Kitchen-sink mentality in full effect: the group's new album *Derelicts of Dialect* continues to push rap's boundaries by sampling everything from jazz to JFK; and with "Pop Goes the Weasel" headed straight for the Top 40, it seems as if the boys are about to get props despite their distaste for pop-rap. Not that *Derelicts* is moving in that direction. Combining old-school élan with lyrical potency, it moves the grooves well past the booty and into the heart. Nostalgia aside, the album also reflects their dark, ominous concern about the welfare of rap music.

"It's depressing," says Pete Nice. "At this point, maybe two-thirds of [rap] is awful and the other third makes up for the rest of it. The problem is not so much with the artists but with the record labels that are starting to push artists like Gerardo and call him a rapper. The commercialization of rap makes it hard for good artists to get out there." Serch is even more somber: "The main problem that we have to face as a community that cares about this music is not about *fraud* artists. While we were here promoting the sincerity of the music, everyone wanted to focus on us, and the worst Pat Boone look-alike in the world came out and just vicked [victimized] us all. If you can allow a rapist to get away with rape like that, it's not saying much about you as a person. If you want to look at me and say that I'm the rapist, you need to look at the top of the pop charts and find the true rapists."

But who's vicking who? Black neonationalists equate hip hop with the revolution; faux-homeboy critics try to direct the course of the music by writing themselves into relevance; old-schoolers call for back to basics; new jackers go for theirs; and everybody's crying, "Mine! mine! mine!" Ask Serch about entitlement and he breaks into a gorgeous litany of "remember when"s: "I remember when Red Alert first came on the airwaves, when Paco was the only DJ in New York doing rap, when Flavor was doing 'Party in My Pants' on BAU. I was surrounded by it. I grew up by it. That's what gives me or anyone else like me our claim." Pete, meanwhile, is a bit more of an aesthete. "It's more than that," he insists. "Since our music has gotten so much acclaim, I guess it's good. If other groups come out and put out something that's incredible, then that gives them as great acclaim as anyone else, regardless of where they've been. There's groups from the West Coast who are making good records and they've never been to the Latin Quarters."

But the question remains, Where will rap be in the next decade? Serch cold-swipes me with his counterpunch. "It goes beyond making good music. As a white artist especially, I say this from the heart. If you're a thirteen-year-old white kid in Kansas, then you better know twenty years of history before you make a record. And if you're making it when you're eighteen then you better know twenty-five years of legacy."

Word to the 3rd.

DANNY CLINCH

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BULL DURHAM
BULL DURHAM

THE unbelievable TRUTH

The real story behind EMF—what the name really stands for, what's up with the sampling, and more. DAVID QUANTICK takes a dip into the band's Schubert.

"WE DID A FESTIVAL IN Finland—nine thousand people completely paralytic!" raves EMF drummer Mark Decloedt. "And apparently the whole audience smokes the banger."

Excuse me?

"That's our little term for a certain sexual gesture. We asked the whole nine thousand of them if they smoked the banger, and they all said yes!"

Mark cackles in a seriously rural accent. This time last year EMF was playing pubs in its

EMF, *from left:* Zac Foley, Ian Dench, James Atkin, Mark Decloedt, Derry Brownson.

native Forest of Dean, England, to cider-quaffing locals and renting sheep barns to hold concerts in. Now the band's a Top Five act in America, and it can go to Finland and ask people if they "smoke the banger," an obscure term that the band leaves open to individual interpretation.

"I don't know how to feel about being big in America," muses EMF's wise man, guitarist, and songwriter, Ian Dench. "Our manager's just come back from sorting out the next tour, and she says it's crazy, everyone wants us to play their club. Hundreds of offers."

EMF's "Unbelievable"—the single that has given the band the world this summer—wasn't meant to be so effective. Originally released as a taster of the group's ability to mix dance and rock at absurd speeds, it went Top Five all around the world instead. The band's debut album, *Schubert Dip*, is doing the same thing and EMF is exhausted. While fellow members Zac Foley, sampler Derry Brownson, and pathologically quiet singer James Atkin take a break, Mark and Ian are doing the press. The proper, grown-up press, that is.

alleged fact that its members all took Epsom salt laxatives to stay awake and were Mad Funkers. Then the band wrote a song with the chorus "E! / Ecstasy! / M! / Motherfucker, motherfucker! / F! / From us to you!" and chose its record company only after its representative agreed to swim naked across a large lake at three o'clock in the morning.

These are not the actions of the new Monkees. Nor is including a sample of a Black Panther shouting, "What the fuck!" on your debut single.

In worse taste was the inclusion of John Lennon assassin Mark Chapman reading the words of Lennon's "Watching the Wheels" on the band's next single, "Lies." Strangely, this touching tribute went down like a tub of vomit with Yoko Ono and the sample has been removed. Ian is not very repentant.

"We taped it off a television documentary on Mark Chapman; it *is* a bit sick," he concedes. "But it has just the right mood for the song, real atmosphere. There's a great line where Chapman says, 'That's the way destiny works, just do it.' It's just like, wow, that's really good."

tune in and he says turn it up, or make it more manic. They're simple observations, but they're important 'cause I get a bit wrapped up in the writing."

Mark chips in. "Ian writes the tunes, but it wouldn't be the same if it was Ian and four other blokes."

"And as for the tapes," says Ian, "everyone uses tapes. Depeche Mode uses tapes, Pop Will Eat Itself uses tapes, Jesus Jones uses tapes. We use them, but it's a very small part of the sound. We're trying to use technology. The drums and the bass and the vocals and the guitar are live; so's the samples."

Ian calms down a bit. "Derry plays noises and sounds, anyway, not keyboards. When we did *Top of the Pops*, they asked him to play something on the keyboard and he said, 'I don't do that.' "

In an age when long-haired Irish groups dig out their acoustic guitars and fiddles in a spurious hunt for authenticity, EMF is pretty refreshing—a loud guitar band you can dance to that doesn't care what you think about its methods.

Ecstatically yours, the new lads on the block.

EMF chose its record company only after its representative agreed to swim naked across a large lake at three o'clock in the morning.

"In Britain, when we came out," says Mark with a sigh, "we got a lot of coverage from the teen mags. It does you harm as well as good. It's not bad to have a young following, but they do tend to love and hate really quick."

At home, EMF is seen by some as a manufactured Jesus Jones, a New Kids on the Block with swearing. Singer James was recently attacked by an irate Jesus Jones fan for having a hit when Jesus Jones hadn't. As a consequence, EMF is more than keen to be seen as a proper rock band everywhere else.

"In America the attitude to success is better," explains Ian. "They seem to root for the underdog in England."

Mark says, "When we told people here that we'd been compared to Jesus Jones and New Kids on the Block, they were just laughing, you know? They put us next to Red Hot Chili Peppers and Jane's Addiction for live performance, which is great."

Certainly the EMF story is not terribly Osmond-like. Formed out of a loose collection of knockabouts who used to set up open air raves in fields, the band took its name from the

The music on "Lies" is pretty good, too, a power-chord thrash with immense sequencer rhythms, a memorable chorus, and a bizarre mix by Jim Foetus—all "Bulgarian chants and Mexican trumpets," according to Ian. It's a step forward from the poppy rock sound of the album.

"The next album's gonna be very hard, more energetic," says Mark. "We wrote the first one so quick, and then we had to leave Ian there to produce it while we went out and promoted it, so there are bits on it which are gonna niggle us for years now. We're gonna go somewhere exotic and do the next one and do it all live. We'll all come back playing reggae."

There have been hints from crueler tongues that EMF doesn't play anything. Extensive onstage use of tapes and sampler Derry's habit of throwing his keyboard on the floor with no perceptible effect on the live sound added fuel to the rumors of contrivance. EMF is not bothered.

"I'm the musical director," says Ian. "But I couldn't do it without them. They provide so much attitude. Derry's the least active in a technical sense, but he's so involved. I take a

"It disturbs me how people talk of pop," says Ian, "as if pop is not serious and pop is not genuine. I've always been into accessibility. Songs are very important to me, and I don't understand why that should be any less credible than something that's underground or manic."

Yet the NKOTB comparisons have left their mark. Ian sighs, "I wouldn't like to be called a pop group because of those associations. Our attitude is more like a rock band really. We write songs and use technology and sort of metal out with it."

Mark shouts. "We don't say we're a pop band. 'Lies' isn't poppy! When people get hold of the video, they'll wonder what happened to us! Har har!"

Ian sighs again, this time very deeply indeed. "I hope we're not just another pop band. Our roots are bands like the Smiths and Echo and the Bunnymen and the Cure. Everyone in the band considers EMF to be a bunch of metallers."

EMF was offered a support slot on the Guns N' Roses tour by self-confessed fan Axl Rose. NKOTB weren't. You can draw your own conclusions.

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ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

Americans At Their Best

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WIN SPIN

Here's your chance to be a part of the world's coolest youth culture magazine.

the history

When we started planning last March's Special College Issue, we realized it would be impossible to produce a magazine relevant to college students while sitting in our comfy New York offices with our feet propped up on our desks. So we had a bright idea. The best place to work on a college oriented issue we decided, would be from, you guessed it, a college

Before we knew it, our entire editorial and art staff was camped out for a month in Columbia, Missouri. We selected the University of Missouri at Columbia simply on the basis of its interesting Midwest location and its fine reputation of turning out quality students. Columbia and the people we encountered there were quite a distance, both in miles and in culture, from New York. But the experiment worked. We had fun. We scared them. They scared us. We learned from them. They learned from us. But most important of all, we came together and produced one hell of an issue, which included a nationwide survey of college students, a look at the fraternity system, an open forum discussion on what the media has labelled the "twentysomething" generation, local interest articles, and, *of course*, SPIN's usual superb coverage of music and politics.

the contest

But this year we're taking it one step further. Why should we select the college on the basis of what we've heard about its students? Last year we made a great choice, but this year we might not be so lucky. So we figured we'd let you, any current college students, tell us where to do the issue. We're giving you the opportunity to prove to us that you and your fellow students would be the best people to work with on our March 1992 College Edition. And that your college would be the best atmosphere in which we could work together. The students who "win" SPIN should recruit no less than ten classmates to become the SPIN student editorial staff to create the March 1992 edition.

the questions

Interested students must answer the following five questions (typewritten answers only, maximum 300 words each, please). Entrants will be judged on creativity, enthusiasm, ability to write and communicate, and knowledge of music, politics, and popular culture. Students may also include a résumé outlining extracurricular activities, work experience, internships, honors, etc... And don't forget the deadline (October 1). Editors at SPIN never miss deadlines.

1. Why would your college and its location be the best place for SPIN to produce a great March 1992 issue? (You may want to mention interest in music on campus, any local music "scene," students' political interests, student activism, student publications and organizations, problems on campus that SPIN could address, etc.)

2. What are your personal musical views? (This shouldn't be just a list of bands that you happen to like. You may want to discuss general music trends, the state of popular music today, college or commercial radio, SPIN's music coverage, the future of music, etc.)

3. If you had the chance to change SPIN in any way, what would you do? (You may want to discuss columns you would create or special theme editions on which you'd like to work. You could also select an issue of SPIN and write a critique of its contents.)

4. SPIN recently published an article by former DEA agent Michael Levine on the nation's drug war that was so controversial no other publication would touch it. Given the opportunity to write or assign an important non-music feature of you choice, what topic would you tackle and why?

5. List five people that you'd like to see written about in SPIN, and why?

One entry per student or student group. The deadline for entries is October 1, 1991.
Void where prohibited and all that stuff. By the way, we don't think it's prohibited anywhere.

Mail your entry to:
WIN! SPIN
c/o SPIN
6 W. 18th Street
New York, N.Y. 10011

Good luck. We're looking forward to working with you.

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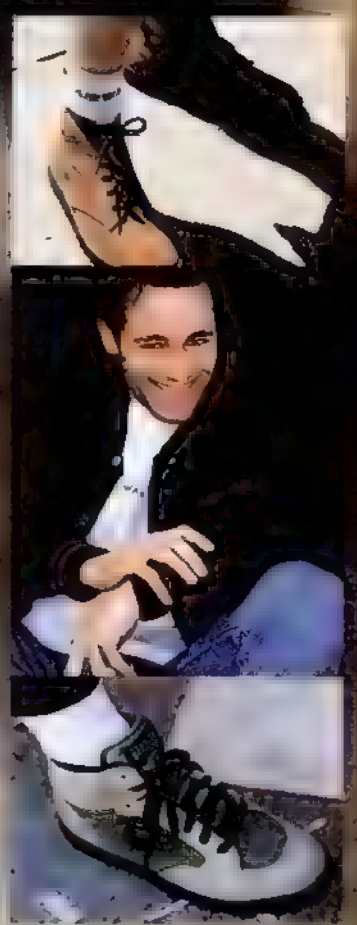
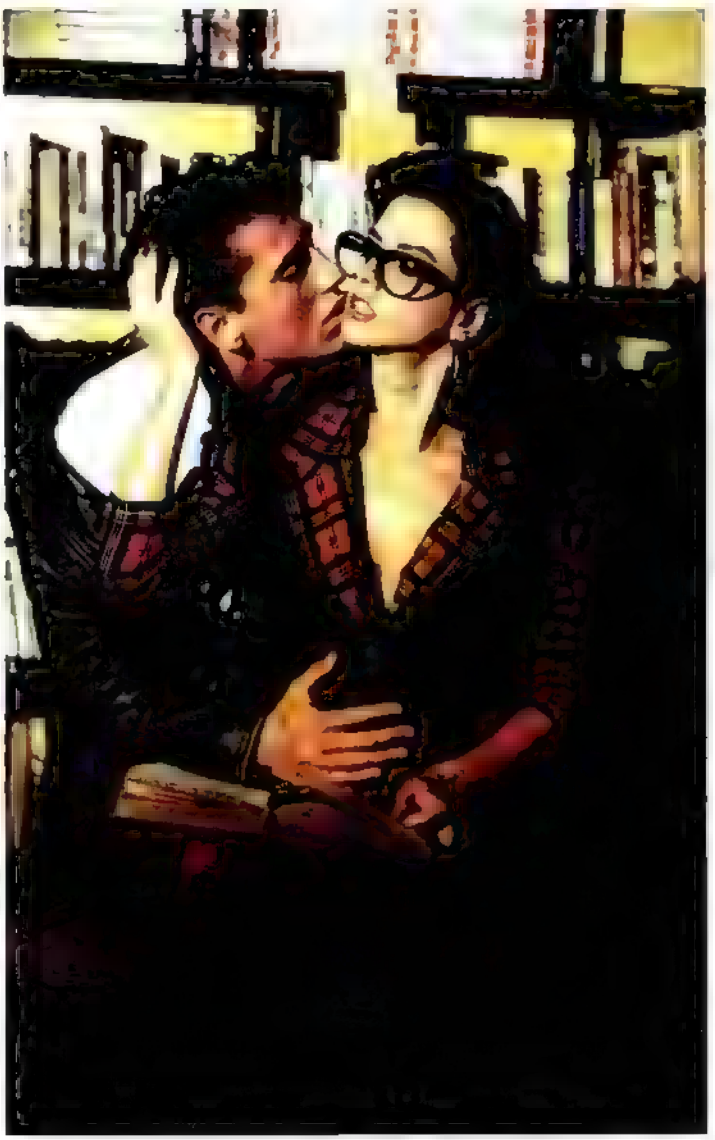


school daze

Need a good reason to go back to school? You don't need to know much about history to figure this one out. Just put two and two together. In the old days, it was enough to go smokin' in the boy's room, but things are more complicated now. . . .

Material chroniony prawem autorskim

Hot for Teacher *page 66*: She is wearing a navy-blue cotton/Spandex sweater with zip front by Benetton, a black leather miniskirt by Michael Hoban for North Beach, and silver hoop earrings by Sasson. Her black eyeglasses are by Christian Roth for Optical Affairs. Hosiery by Calvin Klein Hosiery. **Teacher, I Need You** *page 67, left to right*: He is wearing a batik-print cotton shirt and putty-colored five-pocket loose-fit jeans by Gotcha Sportswear. Burgundy clip-on suspenders by Swank, white cotton socks by Burlington Prima Sport, and black canvas All Star athletic shoes by Converse. She is wearing a green and brown plaid tapered-waist wool blazer by Georges Marciano, brown cotton/Lycra dress by Michael McCollom for Isaia. Black suede pumps by Nathalie M. **Don't Stand So Close to Me** *page 68, left to right*: She is wearing a white cotton/Lycra tank by the Gap and a gray wool miniskirt. Black suede belt by Benetton. He is wearing a red nylon bomber jacket by Avirex, apple-green hooded sweatshirt by J. Crew, a black and white YA-DIG cotton T-shirt, orange suede-wash cotton jeans by Cross Colours. Black leather beaded belt by J. Crew, black leather Fifth Avenue Waistpak by Eastpak, and Olympian III Wayfarer sunglasses by Ray-Ban. **Teacher, Teacher, Teach Me Love** *page 69, left to right*: He is wearing a floral-print cotton shirt by J. Crew, Made in Italy European Fit Ice Bomber Wash jeans by Edwin Jeans. Blue suede belt by Paul Smith and purple classic canvas sneakers by Vans. She has on a black wool "Boyfriend" jacket by Georges Marciano, a white cotton shirt by the Gap, and a black rayon chiffon skirt by J. Crew. **"They send you off to college to gain a little knowledge but all you wanna do is learn how to score"** *page 70*. He is wearing an antiqued motorcycle jacket by Avirex, a white pocket T-shirt by the Gap, and relaxed-fit five-pocket stonewashed jeans by Bonjour. She wears a black stretch jacket with plaid accents and a red plaid drop-waist kilt by Necessary Objects, and gold-hoop earrings by Sasson.



Fashion by John R. Dixon; photography by Richard Dillon;
makeup by Rex for Timothy Priano; hair by Jim Fechtenbaum for Bruno Pitini–N.Y.C.; text by Mary Ann Marshall.

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GUNS N' NEUROSES

Is Guns N' Roses' appetite for destruction really an exorcism of small-town ghosts? DEAN KUIPERS combs Indiana's Corn Belt and finds the missing link in Axl Rose's evolution from country boy Bill Bailey.

It's probably been a long time since a G N' R show was delayed by anything as innocuous as stage fright. Skid Row had left the stage more than two hours earlier, and the crowd had since been booing through two hours of vid-bites from *Evil Dead II* on the overhead screens. Axl hadn't played Indiana in three years, and sources backstage said he was "extremely nervous" in front of friends, family (and former detractors) from his hometown of Lafayette, Indiana.

Five minutes earlier, the men's toilet had been full of drunken white homeys in a mood to stomp somebody because of the delay. These are G N' R's people.

One kid on the beer patio groaned, "I think that when [Axl] lived here, he wasn't shit—and now he's taking revenge." His girl was passing out. "But he's taking revenge on the wrong people."

A premature harvest moon sat plop in the first sticky jungle night of summer over Deer Creek Music Center, an amphitheater outside Indianapolis surrounded by cornfields and the smell of hay and dirt. It was still about 85 degrees for the Guns N' Roses homecoming show, the third in their first arena tour as a headliner. The last chords of a ballistic "Rocket Queen," the set opener, rattled the teeth in 17,000 open mouths, emptying of hysteria like when the Beatles did Ed Sullivan.

Axl prowled the stage for a moment then motioned for Slash to hold up a second. I have never heard an outdoor crowd roar so loud, for so long, in response to so little.

"You fuckers been waitin' a long time tonight, huh?" he growled in his natural voice (not the "arena voice" of Sebastian Bach).

He looked down briefly, then barked something to the effect of: "This stage here, in Indianapolis, Indiana, this time around, is the finest fucking stage in the world that I could ever walk . . . because I grew up in this state for two-thirds of my life.

"It seems to me that, basically, there are a lot of fucking scared *old* people in this fucking state and for two-

STEVEN KRONINGER

thirds of my life those motherfucking *old* people tried to hold my ass down."

Axl's impromptu screeds are the stuff of legend, and the 1991 tour has been peppered with tongue-lashings at Geffen Records, *SPIN*, *Rolling Stone*, people in the audience who throw shit, critics, teachers, cops, et cetera.

But Axl struck a nerve in Indiana. Deer Creek was seized by an emotional warp. W. Axl Rose, the undisputed heavyweight champion of faux pas, reached out and told every kid in the Midwest that he or she each shared a common enemy with Axl. That maybe they were all underachievers—but only on a scale devised by aliens from another generation. It was instantly clear that this shared sense of alienation is why G N' R are the biggest band in the U.S. The crowd exploded with a noise that completely drowned out the P.A.

"So I don't know nothing about Iraq [*loud boos*]; I lived in L.A. ten years already and that don't mean shit. But I know what the fuck's goin' on out here and this band's one of the only things these kids got."

Axl shrieked into an unimaginable version of "Out ta Get Me," with the rest of the band smiling and anyone who's ever had a moment of self-doubt firmly planted in his back pocket.

Their Indiana homecoming show was magic. Axl did little sashaying (mostly because of a leg cast, the result of a misstep at the Ritz in New York), cut the clichés, and dipped directly into the gestalt. Slash, the best indicator of the band's tepid-to-torrid mood swings, ripped like he had some kind of black demon up his ass and lavished almost religious energy on the elegant flamenco melody in the new song, "Double-Talkin' Jive."

This band has sucked shit more often than not since it curtailed live appearances after the fiasco at the October 1989 Rolling Stones shows at the L.A. Memorial Coliseum—where slurs against "immigrants," "faggots," and "niggers" in the song "One in a Million" brought on a confrontation with Living Colour, and Axl and Slash's onstage discussion of heroin problems sent most of the beautiful people and "Huge Industry Giants" (the band's words) packing to more politically correct camps. They gave ragged performances at the January 1991 Rock in Rio II festival and the April 1990 Farm Aid IV, where they played only two songs.

Worse, they ripped off over 6,000 of their most die-hard fans while warming up for the 1991 tour with three floundering small-theater shows in San Francisco, L.A., and New York. Those shows were plagued by aborted songs, delays, and costume changes, and were excused onstage as "live rehearsals."

After raging through "Welcome to the Jungle" in the encore at Deer Creek, a visibly exhilarated Axl mused: "I'm thinking back to a gig we played once in L.A., at a club called the Troubadour, and everything just went completely fucked and wrong. I asked Slash what the fuck was goin' on and he said, 'I guess God doesn't want this band to happen.' "

Axl added, "Now . . . [*huge roar*] . . . I'm thinking that God, he wants this band to happen."

Some people got a chip on their shoulder
And some would say it was me
But I didn't buy that fifth of whiskey
That you gave me
So I'd be quick to disagree
—from "Out ta Get Me,"
Appetite for Destruction, *lyrics by Axl Rose*

THE RUST BELT PUNK WHO BECAME W. AXL ROSE has built an empire from the chips constantly falling from his shoulder. It appears that since a very young age he has had a singular mission: to prove to himself that some piece of America would accept his mind, his obvious talent, and even his rage, without any compromise. To create a creature who was exactly who he thought he could be. And then to show us that we were the ones with the chip; we were the ones buying him that fifth of whiskey.

By now we've paid for a few. A knock-around kid like Axl had to rule America before his vision and his sense of self-worth were justified back home. And from that vantage point he sometimes gets beyond his petty feuding to dump bad attitude on things we'd all like changed: the hypocrisy of small-town morality; the dysfunctional family; the tyranny of police everywhere; the limits of experience; boredom.

The Rust Belt punk who became W. Axl Rose has built an empire from the chips constantly falling from his shoulder.

Axl ran down that piece of America with a Cadillac. After a 1986 EP released on the band's Uzi Suicide label, "Live Like Suicide," went almost unnoticed, the band wrangled a reported $75,000 recording advance out of Geffen on the strength of their L.A. club rep and dropped the bomb: *Appetite for Destruction*.

Through the latter half of 1987, *Appetite* also languished at the low end of the *Billboard* charts while G N' R toured like hell. Suddenly in 1988 AOR radio and MTV realized that *Appetite* had gone gold without any airplay. A groundswell of word-of-mouth metal 'zine support had created an underground phenomenon reminiscent of Metallica.

By August 1988 *Appetite* plowed into No. 1 on *Billboard*'s album chart, powered by "Sweet Child o' Mine," "Paradise City," and MTV's video play of "Welcome to the Jungle." It stayed on the charts for almost three years and sold 12 million copies worldwide—the biggest-selling debut album of all time. A less-inspired EP, *G N' R Lies*, was released in November 1988 and within a few months joined *Appetite* in the Top Five. *Lies* sold five million copies.

Axl and the rest of G N' R remain as conflicted, hair-trigger, and tight in everyone's face as ever. Their media contracts (the January–May 1991 version and the reported current version) continue to be a liability. In the midst of wild success they have been variously drug addicted, paranoid, homophobic, racist, xenophobic, ruthless, violent, a threat to the liberty of the press, and a pain in the ass to almost everyone—and largely because a nation of blue-collar fans has encouraged them to take it further. To push. To prove it again every day.

Bill Bailey Versus W. Axl Rose

Lafayette, Indiana, is a blue-collar town about 65,000 small, the eastern part of the city separated by the rank Wabash River from west Lafayette and Purdue University. Not unlike many small towns, the river is a demarcation zone. One side doesn't mix with the other, and for kids the rivalry is obsessive.

The lower-middle-class residents of east Lafayette work at A. E. Staley's corn syrup plants, out at the Subaru-Isuzu factory, or at Eli Lilly Pharmaceuticals. They fix their own cars at curbside. Axl and Izzy grew up there as Bill Bailey and Jeff Isbell. The popular conception is that west Lafayette is white-collar middle class, home of Purdue academics and professionals.

Monica Gregory runs Lafayette's Rock Vault, the only rock'n'roll clothing shop in the Lafayette

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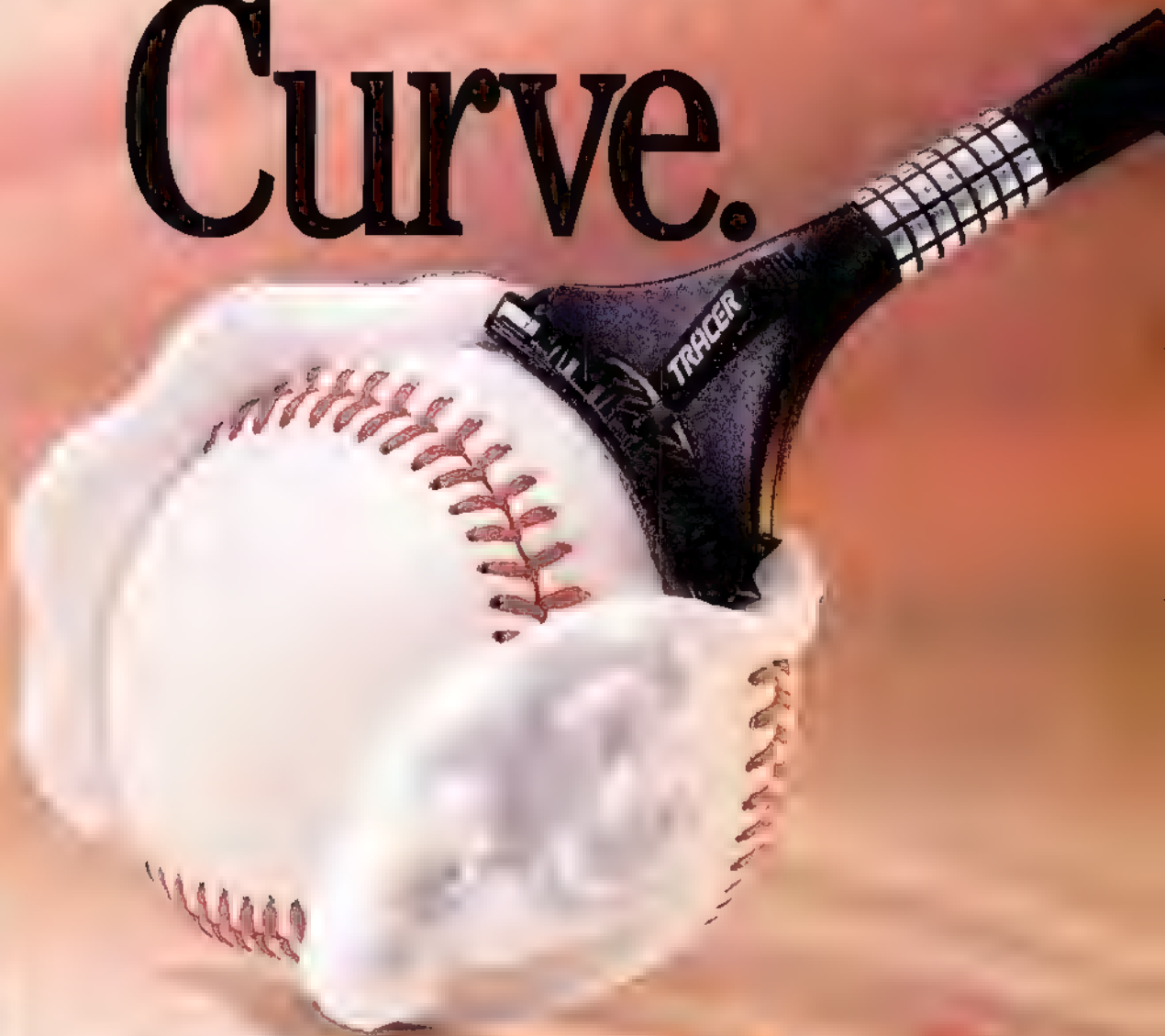
Now. The Perfect Curve.



INTRODUCING TRACER FROM SCHICK

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area. She and her ex-husband Dana are part of a close, creative gang of about a dozen Lafayette artists and outcasts that included Bill Bailey long before he metamorphosed into Axl at age 18. Monica has turned down several interviews over the last two years, in deference to Axl and Izzy, but agreed to discuss the small-town oppression exorcised by Axl at Deer Creek.

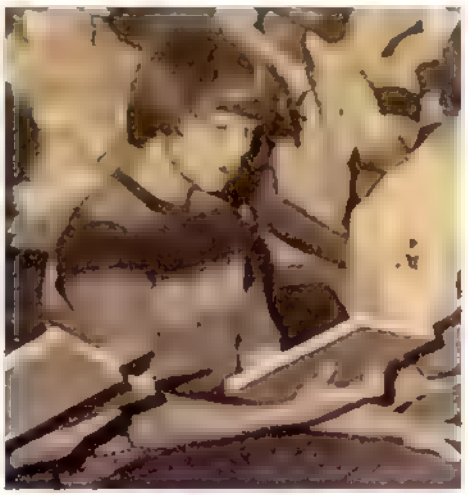
"It's not really a chip on his shoulder," she says. "He got hassled a lot, for a variety of reasons. I don't want to go into it other than to say that it *is* legitimate.

"It happened to him in Chicago once—he was with my ex-husband at the time—and for very little reason, these guys started hassling them: 'Who do you think you are? Bon Jovi?' It was like: 'No, leave me alone.' The guys with the ties and short hair were yelling obscenities at Axl and Dana 'cause they got long hair.

"All the cops came in and basically beat the crap outta Axl. . . . Just *because*."

Gina Siler spent three years in the eye of the maelstrom of Axl's ambitions, rages, and adolescent scrapes with cops. She began dating Axl when she was 17 and still a senior in high school. Axl was 20 and had already bussed or hitchhiked out to L.A. and back twice. In December 1982 she finished high school early so she and Axl could move to L.A. together in her car. They lived together on and off until 1985, and were engaged to be married "about nine times" by her count. She jokingly calls herself "the missing link" because she says Axl now refuses to acknowledge her. Today Gina is a senior at the University of Arizona. She has never before been approached by reporters.

"When I met him," Gina says, remembering, "I was having my seventeenth birthday party. He had on a long trench coat, dark glasses, collar pulled up, and said he was trying to stay away from the police. I asked, 'What happened?'



The long road from Bill Bailey to Axl Rose.

"He said, 'Nothing. They just always bother me. They always harass me, no matter where I am.'

"But he would do some pretty wild things. They would go out and drink and do some stupid things, like smash windows along Main Street."

Gina recalls that the first time Axl bussed back to visit her from L.A., cops got to him before she did. "He was walking down the street, and it was probably two o'clock in the morning. From the back, he looks very effeminate, with his long hair—not common for that area—and very thin legs, and he had a long coat on. These police were making comments, making gestures, because they thought he was a woman.

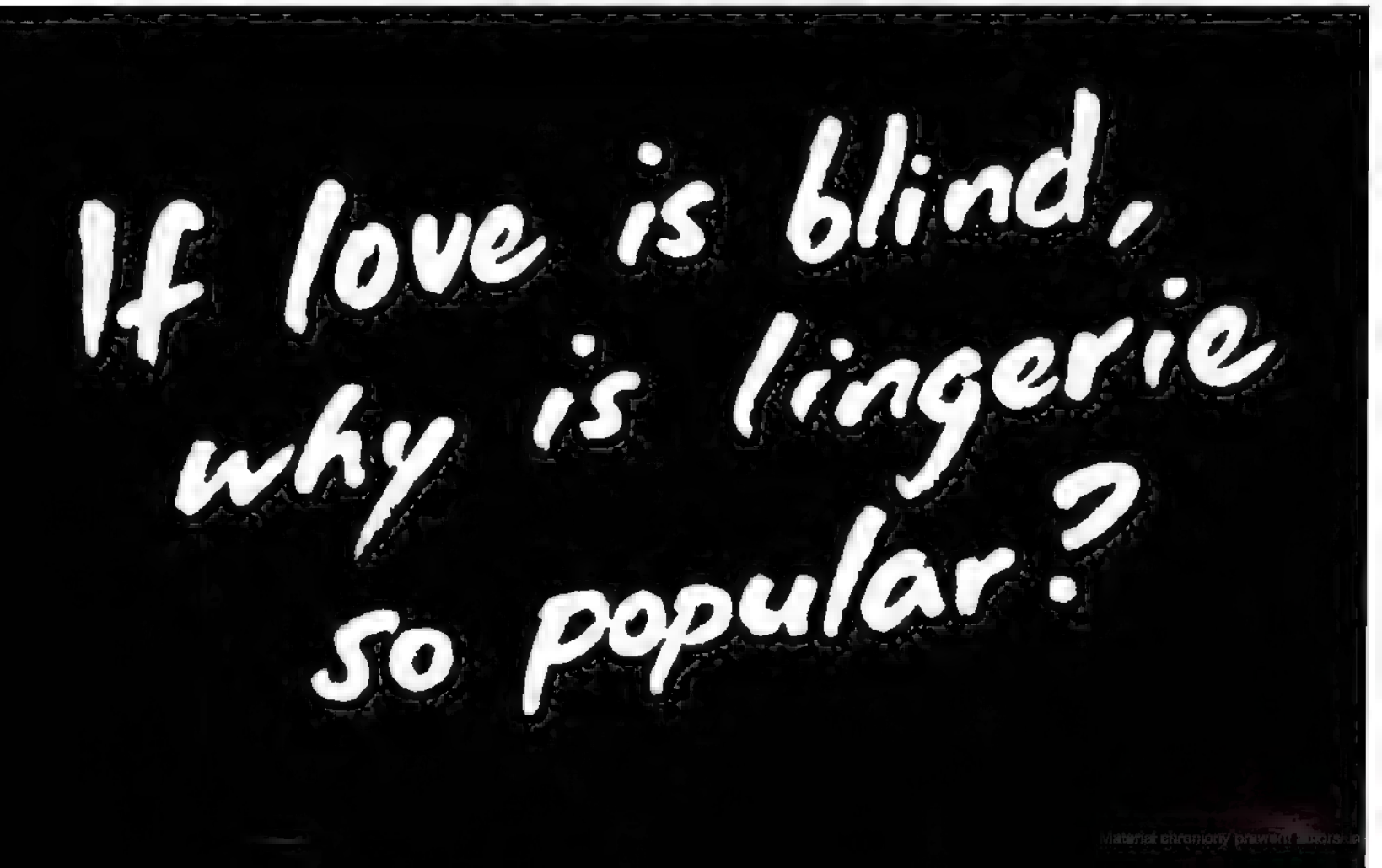
"Until he turned around, and they were very embarrassed to find out it was a male. So they started hassling him, because they were homophobic as hell. They questioned him, and then found out it was Bill Bailey, who'd obviously been in trouble before—and threw him in jail."

According to Gina, "He called me about three o'clock in the morning and said, 'I'm in jail. You got to get me out.' I skipped school the next day. And they brought him out in cuffs. Took him to court. I had to pay his bail."

How strange that Axl would later end up sounding like a scared midwestern cop, espousing the same misdirected homophobia.

"There was so little there to do," Gina explains. "He'd be in fights a lot. And I don't think that he's even conscious of what he does, or how angry he gets. Somebody told me that he's on lithium, to try and control—because he's a manic depressive. I always thought that there was something chemical that happened to him when he was angry.

"That image of him sitting in that electric chair, in that video 'Welcome to the Jungle,' looking



crazed, says it all. That's what he looks like when he's pissed off. And when you see that coming at you from across a room, coming near you, it's frightening as hell. And I'm not very big, and that made it even worse. I won't go much into that."

Anger and boredom threw Bill Bailey into constant tension with the law. Tippecanoe County Court records indicate that Axl spent a total of ten days in county jail as an adult over a period from July 1980 through September 1982, on charges of battery, contributing to the delinquency of a minor, public intoxication, criminal trespass, and mischief. He was arrested four times as a juvenile.

According to Monica, the gang hung out on local friend David Lank's front porch, or at Axl's grandmother's house, which was right behind the frozen custard shop on the edge of Columbian Park, only a hundred yards from Axl's house. Ironically, they often hung out on the park's tiny stage and talked about how they might open some minds in their hometown.

"There was one real cool place called the Stabilizer," said Monica. "And David Lank's front porch; in Axl's bedroom because he just had mattresses sitting around and drawing pads and his piano and you could get really artistic in whatever way you wanted to.

"He got a piano and put it in his bedroom and practiced. He would just sit down and play the most beautiful things—I mean, beautiful. He turned me on to Elton John 'cause he used to do a lot of Elton John.

"The creative side he had was so intense," Monica adds. "And I think it grounded the little group of people that was there for I don't know how many years even before I entered the picture."

This circle of artists was clearly an aberration among east-siders, and included: Izzy, originally a drummer; songwriter David Lank (now in the L.A. band Mank Rage); Dana Gregory (an artist in Lafayette); Mike Staggs (in Dumpster, now in L.A.; opened for G N' R in San Francisco); David Pyle (musician); and Shannon Hoon (singer for Blind Melon, recently signed to Capitol). Monica Gregory is virtually the only one that hasn't left for the palm-tree violence and plastic of L.A.

Gina Siler spent three years in the eye of the maelstrom of Axl's ambitions, rages, and adolescent scrapes with cops. In December 1982 she finished high school early so she and Axl could move to L.A. together. She jokingly calls herself "the missing link" because she says Axl now refuses to acknowledge her.

"He came back [from L.A.] in the summer after my junior year, which would have been '82," said Gina. "And then he spent the summer there, and we had a *wonderful* time.

"We did a *lot* of hallucinogenics. Wrote a lot of poetry. Did a lot of writing. Did lots of skateboarding. We'd go to parks and play Frisbee—we always had music with us—Queen or Nazareth or AC/DC or Sex Pistols or Aerosmith. We'd go hang out at Purdue. We'd sit around in somebody's room and do acid and paint on the walls. I had pink hair and dressed real strange.

"So we always had the police around a lot. One time, there was a baseball game across the street at the park, and there was almost a huge fight. And it was, like, nine or ten good ol' boys, and then us, and *nothing* had happened. They just didn't like us because we had different ideas.

"[Axl] and David Lank had designed this huge banner; they wanted to call the band Axl. Izzy was already in L.A.—there was this idea of things they wanted to do, but for a long time, Izzy and Axl just didn't click."

Izzy had graduated from Jefferson High School in 1979 (the only one of the original Gunners to get a diploma) and moved to L.A. in 1980.

"The people back in Indiana, they missed out on something that I got to experience," says Gina. "I lived with him during that period of 'Bill' to 'Bill Axl' to 'Axl.' It was the *strangest* thing, be-

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The La's

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cause some days he'd be Bill, some days he'd be Axl, some days I didn't know who the hell he was. I didn't know what to do, because I didn't know what person he was. For a long time he tried to dispel the fact that he had ever lived in the Midwest. He was trying to build an image, and a persona of a musician he thought he wanted to be.

"And sometimes I find it ironic that that thing which he tried most to get away from is what he's trying most to go back to.

"He is *extremely* intelligent," insists Gina. "That was one of the things that attracted me to him. He is just a nit-picky perfectionist and when things don't go smoothly and to his liking he just loses it. He blows up. I've seen him do it on many occasions, smashing things and breaking things and yelling and screaming—holes through walls. Seen him do it one too many times."

Axl and the rest of G N' R remain as conflicted, hair-trigger, and tight in everyone's face as ever. In the midst of wild success they have been variously drug addicted, paranoid, homophobic, racist, xenophobic, ruthless, violent, a threat to the liberty of the press, and a pain in the ass to almost everyone.

Gina and Axl left Lafayette for good in her car on December 19, 1982, and moved into "some shit hole" at 1921 Whitley Avenue in Hollywood.

"He knew he wanted to be in a band. He was made to be a musician. I went to West L.A. Community College, and had some cheesy part-time job somewhere. We lived there for five months, and then I moved out. He stayed there, and then Izzy moved in for a while. In fact, while we were living there he got into [the band] Hollywood Rose."

It becomes apparent that neither Axl nor any of the other future Gunners lived "on the streets" as much as they would like us to believe. "There were times when he would take my car to practice," says Gina. "I would help him do his makeup. No, he didn't live on the streets entirely. I helped him out quite a bit. I don't think he likes to think about that, though.

"There were times, granted, when he lived on the streets after I'd kick him out because I got tired of trying to support the both of us, and I got tired of fighting. I would describe the two of us as putting a nuclear warhead in your living room and hitting it with a hammer and just waiting. That was what the two of us together were like."

Gina says she bought him the rose tattoo for his birthday—the one that reads "W. AXL ROSE" and sealed his identity in blood. Another Lafayette pal bought Axl his first P.A. system for Christmas years earlier (on condition that he bring it back when he became a star, which he did). Members of that Lafayette Commune have remained G N' R satellites to this day. But a few, including Gina, were disgusted by Axl's flickering vision once the star-maker machinery kicked in for real around late 1985.

During the years 1983 through 1985, Axl networked and petulantly threatened to dye his hair black or blond. On many occasions he also threatened to cut it off and go back to school and become a "suit." Axl and Gina "didn't do drugs then," she says. "He exercised a lot. We didn't have any money to do anything."

Gina returned to L.A. from Phoenix to visit Axl at the end of 1985. "It was a huge apartment. And these people were just sleeping everywhere. I remember Axl and some other guy—I can't remember his name—picked me up at the airport. I was really pissed because they were doing heroin. *Really pissed.* God, that weekend was awful. All's we ever did was fight.

"I shouldn't even tell you this, but when I went to see him before *Appetite* came out, and all he said to me was, 'I can't wait until this album's done, because I want to lock myself in a room for six weeks and do heroin.' "

Gina and others point to the recent single, "Civil War," from the George Harrison Romanian relief album, performed at Farm Aid IV, as a hopeful sign that Axl and G N' R might have survived megadecadence with part of their more positive vision intact. But many of the band's hometown critics simply see them continuing a hard spiral into madness and decadence.

The *Indianapolis Star* sent reviewer Marc D. Allan to the show at Deer Creek. He seemed to completely miss the point of Axl's soliloquy on Indiana, writing: "Some people don't know when to shut up. And Rose, immensely talented though he is, is one of those people.

"He ought to get over it. There are people with real problems out there, and the meager gripes of a millionaire rock star don't amount to a hill of beans in this crazy world."

I would argue that they do amount to a hill of beans. The only beans that count to the young and inspired. I was driving in Lafayette one noon with a dude named Chad from a local band, Vexatious. I asked him in what way Axl and Izzy were an inspiration.

"More of an inspiration are all the hundreds of dickheads around here who say people like me will never make it. They just scoff and go like, 'Oh, yeah. Sure.' They think *I'm* the asshole. That makes me practice twice as hard, play twice as much, work to make it. I ain't even gonna look back."

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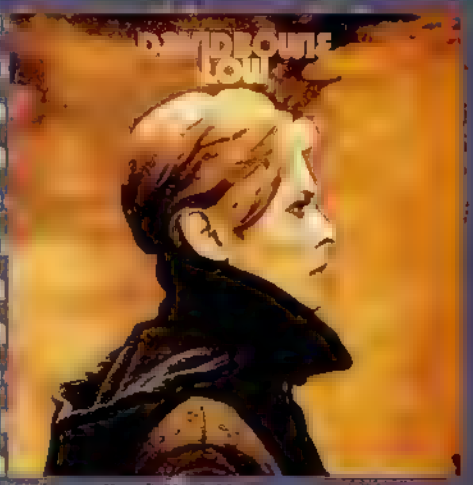

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DREAMING AMERICA

BY SCOTT POULSON-BRYANT

COME CORRECT

OH WHAT A HIP HOP SUMMER IT'S BEEN. I got this gig writing for SPIN. I was disgusted and mesmerized by the sonic blast of N.W.A's chart-topping (!) *Niggaz4Life*. I was enthralled and shaken by the aural beauty that signaled the Death of De La Soul. I cried tears of sadness and joy during the final moments of hip hop's first true cinematic epic, John Singleton's *Boyz N the Hood*. I hung out with one of my idols, producer Prince Paul, jamming to the jeep beats of some brilliant new rap albums. And I learned from former rap critic John Leland—woe is him!—that black culture just isn't fun anymore. How much stimulation can a young black man take?

Let's talk about Leland. He was one of the few young white men to even rhetorically go near the Hip Hop Nation in its (recorded) meteoric rise from well-hung ghetto music of the black masses to tentative crossover sensation to rhythmic sociological text of the educated, critical elite. Hovering somewhere in the slang-ridden, liberal apologist zone historically cherished by white writers who write about all things black, Leland carved a passionate niche for himself in SPIN's pages simply by loving the music. He seemed to be more than just an iconoclastic, middle-class "Harvard homeboy" transferring his theoretical chops to hip hop due to the dearth of palpable ideas in the usual rock-crit pile of rebellious guitar slingers. For me as a black writer and a fan of the form being critiqued, Leland's style was the best one could hope for. Especially since, somewhere along the way (and in the pitiful absence of black writers), white folks started thinking hip hop was theirs.

So it really came as no surprise to read Leland's dour diatribe in *Details* documenting the death of hip hop. "Rap has all but lost its irresponsible pleasures," he wrote. And I ask, irresponsible for and to whom? Rap is apparently "incapable of producing the offhand, idiotic brilliance of records like Audio Two's 'Top Billin' ' or Doug E. Fresh and M.C. Ricky D's 'La-Di-Da-Di' or the uncomplicated viciousness of N.W.A's '——tha Police.' " Rap has gone the way of pious pop, Leland believes, most poignantly symbolized by Ice Cube's departure from the cop-killin', ho-smokin' ways of N.W.A to become an intelligent, commentator on the rage and destruction that his former group romanticizes so well. Leland reckons that it was Ice Cube, not Vanilla Ice, that killed rap, because Cube has taken on the explanatory/moralistic function of writers and social workers, taking rap from "the roguishness of the Fox Network to the staid ho-humness of CNN." (Leland's words conveniently trade on Chuck D's apt definition of rap as the infotainment locus for young black people.) In the immortal words of the *Details* cover star, Ice-T, I think Leland played himself.

Pop music may die at the stigmata-scarred hands of pious crooners like Sinéad and Sting, but hip hop has a built-in reverence that, however heavy-handed to the likes of Leland, grows from a sermonic tradition in black music culture that creeps into even the most delirously dim-witted dance track. Leland's oft-quoted fave, Rob Base and D.J. E-Z Rock's "It Takes Two," is as much about the salvation of the black male voice as it is about whatever dance fascinated Leland while watching the video. And, however cynical hip hop becomes as a part of the American pop pantheon, self-awareness and piety such as Ice Cube's "illin'-as-metaphor" approach doesn't make rap less jolly, but instead more smart—and thus, more threatening. With this approach, Ice Cube effectively cleared the way for rappers like Vanilla Ice: If the black boys weren't going to party hearty to the break of dawn, shucking and jiving in the latest B-boy fashion and slang, a white boy could go right ahead and do the whitest thing known to white Americans—act black!

Ice Cube's approach doesn't make rap less jolly, but instead more smart—and thus, more threatening.

Which is not to say that rap is solely a black gig to which only black folks should be privy. Sensitivity and honesty are the keys here: Trying to cram hip hop into his own "pious pop" argument, Leland piously seems to forget that hip hop came out of a neighborhood that he can only visit—as the Sex Pistols said—on a cheap holiday in other people's misery. Of course the boys from the 'hood can manipulate that always ominous misery in two ways (the same ways an angry writer like myself can): They can cynically dupe white folks with vinyl "realness" or they can act like real black folks, and deftly deflate stereotypes with self-analysis and, more importantly, self-representation.

So here I am, a black writer in the white void, excited that *Boyz N the Hood*'s investigation of black macho in a black world—starring that most adept pious pop star himself, Ice Cube—signals a bold new step for the Hip Hop Nation. Excited that De La Soul died and resurrected themselves with a passionate, ear-bending blend of black self-love and self-criticism. Excited that N.W.A are at least clockin' the dollars they deserve for old style "blacking up" done to the nines (millimeter, that is). And excited that black culture isn't fun anymore for John Leland. Good. Now maybe he'll find something to play with in his own backyard.

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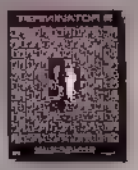

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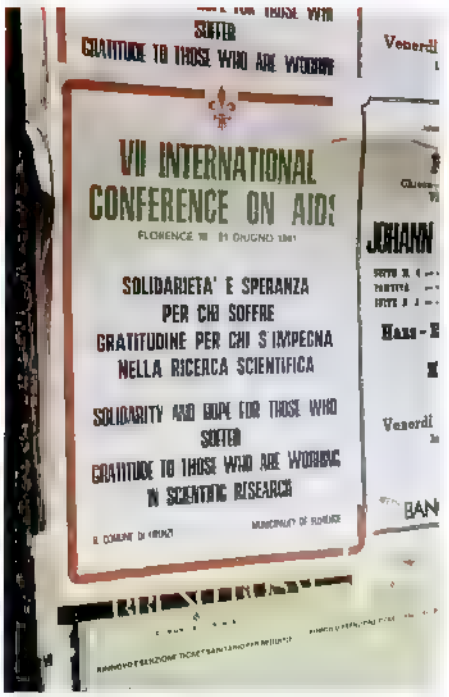
AIDS

WORDS FROM THE FRONT

At the Seventh International Conference on AIDS in Florence, the big news was that there is no news, confirming the activist battle cry that AIDS is business as usual. Is the medical community not trying, or just not succeeding? CELIA FARBER reports.

THEY ARE PECULIAR, these international AIDS conferences. They are so well organized, so (seemingly) well intentioned, so voluminous, and yet ultimately so anticlimactic. *All* the top doctors, scientists, researchers from *all* over the world are there pouring out new data on every imaginable aspect of the epidemic, and yet somehow it all adds up to almost nothing, year after year.

More specifically, we have built a mountain of data over a sand grain of knowledge, and wound up paradoxically more ignorant, in some ways, than when we started. Science is only one part of it—AIDS is ideology, and these conferences are to that ideology what the October Parade is to Communism. The language is fixed, the imagery is fixed, the ideas are fixed. New ideas are not welcome, only variations on the old ones. By 1991 AIDS has become so huge it can't move. Ten years into the epidemic, and a full seven years after the discovery of HIV, we are still in the dark, stumbling through a blizzard of seemingly irreconcilable bits of information. We have an alphabet, but can't seem to make any words.



Activism as usual outside the Seventh International Conference on AIDS in Florence.

The Spread of AIDS

Good news. Tremendous news, in fact. The World Health Organization announced that AIDS will *level off* in the developed world in the 1990s. WHO epidemiologist James Chin said the number of HIV infections will slow down in developed countries in the years to come, to a cumulative total of about two million by the mid-1990s.

For years now there has been a heated debate concerning AIDS in the heterosexual community. One side insisted that the heterosexual "explosion" was on the way, the other said it's never going to happen. Those who warned of this "explosion" were accused of being alarmist, whereas the naysayers were called irresponsible and lackadaisical. Finally, WHO's James Chin says, "I don't think there will ever be an explosive outburst of new infections in the heterosexual populations in general."

In sub-Saharan Africa, by contrast, the number of HIV infections will soar to about ten million by the mid-1990s. The annual number of AIDS cases in that region could reach between 500,000 and 750,000 by the year 2000.

Therapies

No breakthroughs here, but how could there be when the vast majority of drug trials are still obsessing with AZT at every conceivable dosage, shape, form, and angle? Ian Weller, the keynote speaker on clinical trials, seemed almost cagey in his comments about the "toxic trio"—AZT, ddI, and ddC (stars, in that order, of AIDS treatment.) Weller, who is in charge of the massive Concorde trial in Europe, a three-year study to determine the value of AZT in asymptomatic people, said that "important questions remain" on the long-term use of these drugs. "Because of the pressures attending this disease," he said, "there is a temptation for us as clinical scientists to close chapters too early." As for HIV-positive people with no symptoms, Weller said that clearly the goal is to suppress HIV replication in them as early as possible. "But at the moment," said Weller, " I'm not sure we have the right tool." (He means AZT.)

Vaccines

French scientist Daniel Zagury, sometimes called the enfant terrible of vaccine research, attracted more attention than anybody else at the conference, mainly for his highly controversial "vaccinia-based" immunotherapy for AIDS. Vaccinia, the basis for smallpox vaccine, while harmless in healthy people, can be very dangerous in people with compromised immunity. Zagury's research team, which once included Robert Gallo, had genetically engineered the vaccinia virus to include HIV, in hopes that the HIV fragments would stimulate the immune system to fight off infection. Instead, three patients had a severe reaction and died. Following this, the French Minister of Health ordered a ban on the trials and a full investigation. Zagury denied that vaccinia was to blame, and claimed it had been deactivated. Said Luc Montagnier, co-or-original-or-whatever-discoverer of HIV, "Vaccinia is very difficult to inactivate. The ban is right, we need to stop these trials." Gallo withdrew his name from the study a few weeks before the conference.

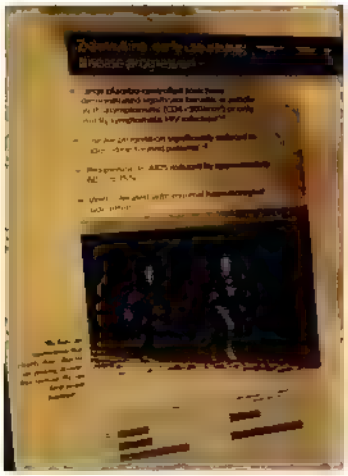
Zagury also presented data on a vaccine that does not incorporate vaccinia, and many doctors felt it was exciting and encouraging data, but the results, although positive, were limited to six people.

Virology

A new NIH study has found previously overlooked reservoirs for HIV infection—lymphoid tissues, adenoids, and tonsils. Researchers found HIV levels 10 to 15 times higher in lymphoid tissues than in the blood of AIDS patients studied. This discovery may shed some light on the question that has been one of the most puzzling in the so-called HIV debate, namely, why the levels of HIV in the blood are so low.

Cofactors

Robert Gallo spoke much of his favorite cofactor, HHV-6, a human herpes virus that Gallo's team at the National Cancer Institute says "may act as a cofactor in the development of AIDS." While the virus, which half the world's population is estimated to be infected with, cannot induce AIDS on its own, the National Cancer Institute team believes it may "broaden the range of T lymphocytes that can be infected with HIV." So I guess this means that HIV doesn't kill "like a truck" after all. Maybe "half a truck" .



"I don't think there will ever be an explosion of AIDS in the heterosexual populations in general."

Left, Burroughs-Wellcome poster for AZT *Right*, videotaping the conference's speakers.

"AIDS" Without HIV

As SPIN has reported in the past, there are patients with full-blown Kaposi's sarcoma and other AIDS infections that do not test positive for HIV antibodies. Dr. Bijan Safai, the head of the dermatology department at Memorial Sloan-Kettering, reported on six such patients, one of whom has had KS for ten years without sero-converting. One patient developed pneumonia and died, still never sero-converting. Last year, a study came out that said that KS is not AIDS at all, and not associated with HIV—that perhaps it was a separate, sexually transmitted disease. But here in Florence, the emphasis is still on HIV, even though no trace of it is found in KS lesions. The theory put forth here was that AIDS-associated KS is caused by a so-called HIV tat gene, which regulates virus replication and causes an imbalance in certain intercellular chemicals called cytokines. Dr. Safai proposed three possible explanations for this phenomena of KS without HIV infection. One was that the men may be unaware of their true ethnic origin and actually be suffering from classic KS. (Huh?)

Second, the patients could be infected with a mutated strain of HIV that is capable of infecting the cells that cause KS but not the immune cells. (Isn't that reaching a little?)

And the third explanation, which Safai stressed not being too keen on, is that KS is simply not caused by HIV but by something else.

At the end of Safai's presentation, HIV defender Robert Gallo sprang up and delivered a kind of measured temper tantrum–sermon that went on for a good 15 minutes, usurping the allotted time for questions from the audience. Gallo was incensed that Safai would even include that last option, disqualifying HIV from the KS-AIDS model. There was time for one person to ask the very appropriate question: "But if a patient died of PCP, and had KS and other opportunistic infections, but did not have HIV, did that patient die of AIDS or not?" The question was left unanswered.

HIV in the USSR

In all Soviet republics, tens of millions of compulsory HIV tests are conducted every year on blood donors, pregnant women, STD patients, homosexuals, IV drug users, and prison inmates. So far, only a few *dozen* have tested positive. Mass HIV screening, which seems like the Soviet thing to do, turns out not to be justified.

HIV in Saliva

Calm yourselves. Yes, it was discovered that HIV can infect cells in mucous membranes, which means that theoretically, the virus could transmit through the mouth, vagina, or anus. Word spread like wildfire that AIDS could now spread via "deep kissing." What didn't get around as fast is that no such case of transmission has ever been documented. Not one, in ten years. So find something else to worry about.

The Burroughs-Wellcome Disco Booth

Downstairs, opposite the poster abstracts is a whole little village of promo booths for drug companies, HIV diagnostic kit companies, condom companies, and assorted AIDS hoopla. They have built wall-less rooms, complete with little gardens and built-in sofas. Burroughs-Wellcome has the largest booth of all, with its trademark blue unicorn looming large, imposing its ubiquitous presence like a kind of Lenin of the AIDS revolution. Beneath the unicorn is the Wellcome credo: "Meeting the Viral Challenge." Well it may be that Wellcome has met viral challenges for other diseases, but with AIDS, a little known and never emphasized fact is that AZT has only a slight and *temporary* effect on HIV replication.

The marketing directors of this company are absolutely masterful. A series of Burroughs-Wellcome posters extolling the benefits of AZT are perhaps the most misleading advertisements I have ever witnessed. One features a beautiful blond child eagerly reading under the soft glow of a lamp, clearly thriving, both physically and mentally, on AZT. The text reads: "In children in particular, zidovudine [AZT] can produce striking improvements in well-being, as well as in weight gain and growth rate."

Hmmm. Poster WA.63, an independently researched scientific abstract across the hall, describes how AZT-treated rats developed weight *loss*, in addition to muscle deterioration and skeletal toxicity. And if we can't assume that the rat results will be the same in humans then what are animal studies good for?

Another Burroughs-Wellcome poster shows two men flying a kite on a beach at dawn. Wellcome tells us that AZT "delays the progression of the disease, lessens the severity of the disease, and improves both quality and length of life."

However, poster WC.43 is a study conducted at San Francisco General Hospital that followed 99 AIDS cases in gay men from 1984 to 1990, to determine changes in survival after diagnosis over time. The conclusion read: "The availability of AZT in 1987 and 1988 does not appear to have affected survival times, perhaps due to a failure to receive or to tolerate therapy. . . . Median survival has only increased by 5.5 months since 1984 to 1985."

As we reported in SPIN in May 1991, an extensive study conducted by the Veterans Administration also concluded that AZT does not prolong life. The issue is still open to debate, and those Burroughs-Wellcome posters, versions of which are also all over the New York subway system, are unethical.

Finally, the most tremendous of the Wellcome posters features two young men dancing through a *bed of red flowers*, and the text next to the picture reads: "The adverse reactions associated with zidovudine (AZT) therapy were minimal."

"*Minimal?*" I shriek, gaping at the poster. "Minimal compared to what?" Famed British AIDS activist Simon Watney steps in, flashes a broad grin, and suggests: "Compared to, perhaps, having your head cut open with a meat cleaver . . . or . . . being burned with cigarettes, or, being *hanged* in public."

I have to laugh. The Burroughs-Wellcome sales reps look our way and whisper something to each other. One of them comes strolling over, smiles cordially, and asks, "Can I help you with something?"

PHOTOS BY SIMON WATNEY

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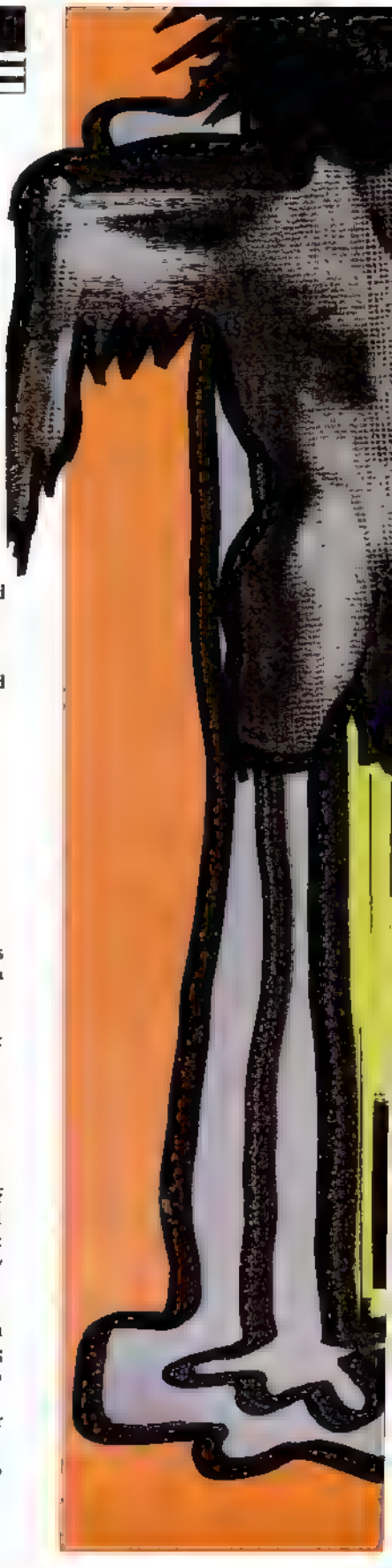
OPINION

Scholar Camille Paglia has declared war on contemporary thinking. She's a pro–pop culture intellectual—an antifeminist feminist—a conservative '60s radical who has broadsided political correctness and defended Madonna. She's the end of an era and the start of a new one. Interview by CELIA FARBER.



HER ASCENT WAS METEORIC. A YEAR AGO YOU HAD never heard of her—now her name is swatted around almost casually, in elevators, offices, and East Village coffee shops, even. "Oh yeah . . . Camille Paglia . . . She's the one who . . . wrote that book, right? Sexual . . . what is it? And she called Madonna the new feminist . . . yeah . . . my girlfriend hates her."

Good. She'd probably hate your girlfriend, too.

Take cover. Camille Paglia's shrill, strident, politically preposterous voice is ringing in the '90s, and what a great way to start a decade—by cleaning intellectual house. In fact, Paglia's stopping just short of burning it down. She is the type of person you either love or hate. She's either brilliant or mad. But either way you have to give her this—she has *started something*, an intellectual blitzkrieg aimed at steering American Thinking (oxymoron?) away from politically correct trendiness, away from what she calls the "fascism of the left," and back to basics.

It is rare if not virtually unthinkable for an academic to penetrate pop culture consciousness. Paglia has simply gunned her way in, with classic Italian-American arrogance and a new hybrid (sexual) philosophy that combines paganism, Catholicism, libertarianism, authoritarianism, and pop culturism. Somehow.

By insisting, for instance, that Elvis Presley is every bit as culturally significant as the Greeks, Paglia is breaking down the barrier between us and them—the academic elite and the pop addicts. She manages, miraculously, to be a rigorously trained intellectual scholar without being a snob.

Politically, she defies all categorization. She is radical *and* conservative, but she's having none of that mush in between. She eats fuzzy liberals and whiny feminists for breakfast. Her idols include Napoléon, Simone de Beauvoir, and Madonna, and she is all of them. A pro-prostitution, pro-pornography, man-loving feminist. A pro-institution, pro-canon libertarian anarchist. A pagan nun. She feels "neither male nor female, straight nor gay, human nor animal." You figure it out. "I'm all lit up," she has said of herself, "but my plug fits no human sockets."

Her book, *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson*, which was rejected by countless publishers for years, has now been nominated for a National Book Critics Circle Award, and is in its third printing. The book has been both critically acclaimed as a work of brilliance, and lambasted as intellectual fraud. Paglia's mentor, literary critic Harold Bloom, has called the book "remarkable. . . . original, and brilliant." "It compels one to rethink the entire question of the literary representation of human sexuality," Bloom said in *New York* magazine.

Sexual Personae explores, within a historical framework, the eternal struggle between the two opposing forces of order and chaos—Apollo and Dionysus. Her book opens with the Rousseau-ian affirmation: "In the beginning was nature."

She has been called a Nazi, a homophobe, and an enemy of women. She is brutally honest, absolutely unable to dilute herself for the sake of acceptance. She is constantly under attack and she will, no doubt, go down in history.

SPIN: One of the things that is so rare about you is that you are a serious scholar and yet you are pro–pop culture, pro-media. Do you think the gulf between the intelligentsia and the masses can be bridged in this country?

Paglia: Well that's exactly the role that I'm about to play. Susan Sontag almost was that bridge, back in the '60s. Here she was, this fabulous intellectual woman of America, homegrown for once. And at first she seemed very interested in the media, and she was talking about popular culture. But then she got so severely attacked by people in academia. They said, "You can't be a serious thinker if you are interested in this." So she began backtracking, and now it's gotten disgusting. She said in *Time* magazine two years ago, "Oh, I don't own a TV"; she said that once a writer came to visit and she had to *rent* a TV because she didn't have one. And then she said, "I don't know why people are criticizing me. After all, I never wrote a whole essay on the Supremes, I merely *mentioned* them." I thought, "Oh you stupid ass, I would have been proud to write an essay on the Supremes." At that very point when she felt sensitive about her credentials as a serious thinker, she began chasing after Roland Barthes in Paris, and all these

Art by Stephen Sprouse

Miller Genuine Draft

ARTIST PROFILE HAVANA 3AM

The world hasn't heard very much from bassist Paul Simonon since 1985, when he and Joe Strummer, as the last holdouts of the splintered Clash, released *Cut The Crap*, a finale for what had once been widely hailed as the only band that mattered. Now Simonon's back—and Miller Genuine Draft's got him. The former Clash rocker, who has been called "the coolest man to ever strap on a bass guitar," has recently put together another great four piece outfit, Havana 3AM, the newest addition to the Miller Genuine Draft Band Network.

Havana 3AM's self-titled debut album sports a stripped down Latino-rockabilly sound, often conjuring up images of high noon in a desert border town (complete with a Latin horn section, vibrato guitar and samples of gunshots and Mexican shouting.) Simonon and crew may seem out of their territory when singing about bullfights and the old west, but they validate themselves by bringing such imagery to an urban setting, where the runaway train is the subway and the outlaws steal cars for joyrides.

Where did the influences for the Havana 3AM concept come from? "I had a lot of Latin type records that I'd picked up on tour with the Clash," Simonon explains. "Then I moved from London to El Paso and kind of hung about after we broke up."

To handle the lead vocals, Simonon recruited his old pal Nigel Dixon formerly of a band called the Whirlwinds. Simonon and Dixon bought two old motorcycles in El Paso and road tripped to Los Angeles, where they took up with Texan guitarist Gary Myrick, formerly of Gary Myrick and the Figures. "We just listened to all these Latin and Reggae records together and formulated the style of the group by just playing." The new group then traveled to Simonon's London where they hooked up with drummer Travis Williams, completing the Havana lineup.

When you check out their show, expect to hear gems from the new album *Havana 3AM*, including the hit single "The Hardest Game," unrecorded songs in the making, and maybe even a rendition of Simonon's popular Clash song "Guns of Brixton." Don't miss Havana 3AM, coming soon at high noon to a town near you.

Get Out of the Old.
Get Into the Cold.™

Miller Genuine Draft

European male writers. Right now we've got a horrible situation with the academic audience completely divorced from the popular audience in their literature and readership. It's appalling. Academia has this contempt for the media and for popular culture. They'll say, "All of our very complex issues are oversimplified and vulgarized by the media." In point of fact, the media is able to see what the main issues are and express them in a very precise and economical way. Academics who have shut themselves off from the media have also shut themselves off from a hundred years of a very efficient and economical way of writing. The academics have this idea that there is this conspiracy of white, male, heterosexist, greedy capitalists using the media as a tool to keep the people down and twist their thinking when in fact it's precisely the opposite. The media is very commercial; it is driven by what people want. So if you want to understand what the popular imagination is like, you have to study the media. I'm noticing that the people coming into the media are people whose minds have been poisoned by their training at Yale and other Ivy League places. For example, I see very clearly where this whole date rape thing is coming from. I recognize the language of these smart girls who are entering the media; they are coming from these schools. They have these stupid, pathetic, completely-removed-from-reality views of things that they've gotten from these academics who are totally off the wall, totally removed. Whereas my views of sex are coming from the fact that I am a football fan and I am a rock fan. Rock and football are revealing something true and permanent and eternal about male energy and sexuality. They are revealing the fact that women, in fact, *like* the idea of a flaunting, strutting, wild masculine energy. The people who criticize me, these establishment feminists, these white upper-middle-class feminists in New York, especially who think of themselves as so literate, the kind of music they like is, like, Suzanne Vega—you know, women's music.

SPIN: *Yuck.*

Paglia: Exactly. Greil Marcus started writing to me after my book came out. He said that there was this woman editor on the West Coast, and when the book came out, he was praising it, but she said, "Oh, I can't stand that book; it's nothing but I, I, I." I said, "Of course it is. It's like rock'n'roll." That's why women have done nothing in terms of great lead guitar work, because to do great solo guitar work you have to have this egotistical, aggressive attitude. One of the bitterest disappointments of my life has been the failure of women to contribute anything important to rock'n'roll. They have done many interesting things in pop, but not in rock. There is not one great female lead guitar player. When the feminists talk about men keeping women back, I say bullshit. And here's an example in our own time, in the last twenty years; nothing is stopping a woman from picking up a guitar. I think it has to do with hormones. I think Chrissie Hynde herself said it. She said, "I would love to be able to play guitar, but my guitar sounds like shit." The actual voice in my book is based on the great guitar solos I was listening to in the '60s. Jimi Hendrix and Cream had a tremendous influence on me. It's really influenced the way I'm writing—the rhythms, the percussiveness of my style. It's very muscular. It's like boom, boom, boom. People who are rock fans love it. They hear it and immediately they know this is the voice of our times. People who do not listen to rock say, "What an obnoxious, brazen woman she is. She is shameless. What's the matter with her?" This whole rock thing that's coming from me is very rare. I'm like the first great player who is a woman—only I do it in words rather than music.

SPIN: You have been called a neoconservative for some of your views on education, mainly your attack on political correctness. It seems to me this label is automatically used in the pejorative, as if liberals had an unquestionable license on virtue somehow, whereas conservatives will always be ethically suspect. Yet it seems to me that the time has come to throw out, or at least rigorously redefine these terms—*liberal* and *conservative*. Good Lord, you've got the conservatives backing the freedom fight in Eastern Europe and the Baltics, and the liberals trying to police people's use of language. Don't we need to start over?

Paglia: *Liberal, conservative*—those words are now meaningless. They belong to a vanished era. The last time they were meaningful was in the '50s when you actually did have an authentic liberal, oppositional, adversarial voice coming out of New York Jewish intellectual circles. Back then you really did have an entrenched WASP establishment in America—Eisenhower and all that. That's when liberalism was most authentic because it was truly adversarial. Most liberals today are utterly incoherent. Their politics are incoherent. They are totally self-sustained. Liberalism does not exist anymore. Liberalism is moribund. Liberalism has generated nothing but a bunch of push-button feel-good emotions. It is not a political system. What we need in this country is a real educational reform, and I think it's going to happen. I hope there will be a bipartisan across-the-board coalition of people concerned about how the young are being educated. And I think that we need political thinking, but it has to begin with the study of politics; it must begin with political theory, history. It cannot just be with people who are ignorant of history throwing around jargon phrases. We have to begin with conservative education in school at the most elementary level of all of world history beginning in ancient times because you have to go way into the past and study the way that culture began. These people who think that we live in an oppressive society—they don't know what they're talking about. My generation, the generation of the '60s, destroyed liberalism because of our own excesses. We rebelled against the repressions and conformism of the '50s, but in this rebellion we went way too far. Many people of that generation took drugs and got their brains destroyed and have played no cultural role since. This whole stultification that is happening in academia is because the

continued on page 102

years of sen[illegible] best[illegible] country on the road, they should know about style.

"I'm into upwardly global funk-a-go-go-a-go-go band called Monkey Meet!"

"Rock 'n' roll rules when Lord Tra[illegible]'s hammerin' on the Gibsons."

"I'm crankin' Psych power funk whenever I get the chance!"

"You haven't seen a live show 'til you've seen Molly and the Heymakers play their plowboy R & B!"

Now, don't be surprised if [illegible] says, "What the hell are you talking about?!" Just be ready—fire back with an "I'm talking about 26 of the hottest touring nightclub bands playing 4,000 sure-to-blow-you-away live gigs a year, from every roadhouse cafe and blues saloon to every showcase nightclub in the country. I'm talking about music made the old-fashioned way—one night at a time, 150 times a year. I'm talking about the Miller Genuine Draft Band Network.

Take this band from L.A. called Monkey Meet. Calling this band funk is much too easy. That's why they call themselves "upwardly global funk-a-go-go!" You've got to check it out. And how about Worldbeat and ska? Most people don't even know what it is. Miller Brewing Company thinks it's hot enough to support L.A.'s Bonedaddys, Rhode Island's BOP (Harvey), Phoenix, Arizona's Morning Star and a New York ska band called The Toasters.

Now, if it's authentic ethnic sounds you want, it's ethnic sounds you get. For starters, there's Zydeco on the Bayou rock 'n' roll, head-bangin' ball music or the it's-hip-to-dig-rap scene. That's too easy. Freak 'em out. Throw some fu-e-d up Miller Genuine Draft. Band Network [illegible] em, because, after ter[illegible]

[illegible] about [illegible]

[illegible] Plowboy [illegible]

[illegible] What's that I hear you [illegible] about not's [illegible]

[illegible] please, [illegible] then ayou [illegible] at [illegible] the Genuine [illegible] Monkey Meet Carl [illegible] wu pwah! [illegible] it out. And [illegible] ngrgtlubbn sp[illegible] call st[illegible]

themselves o[illegible] go!" You've got to check [illegible] about Worldbeat and Ska? [illegible]

And if you want to kick up your [illegible] or cry in your Genuine Draft, the choice ain't easy but they sure are appealing. Check out Mercury Polygram recording artists Grayghost, or how about Warner Bros. Molly and the Heymakers, whose [illegible] "Chasin' Somethin' Called Love" [illegible] country charts last [illegible] How about the roots and rockabilly sound of San Diego's Paladins, New York's [illegible] 7 or The Jinns, who have been known to shake the snow right off the Rocky Mountains?

Now, if you got the blues, the Band Network's got that, too, with guitar slinger Anson Funderburgh and his Rockets, featuring the sweet vocals of Sam Myers. Or, even cure what ails you with the jumpin' blues of Little Charlie and the Nightcats.

So now I'm thinkin' all that music is cool, but what about if all I want to do is rock the house? No problem. Do a Dick Holliday and the Bamboo Gang show; or maybe you're lookin' for the James-Brown-style R & B of The Dynatones, or Marcia Ball's Jerry-Lee-Lewis-Gulf-Coast R & B style, or hitch a ride on Beat the Clock's "Funk Bus," or check out why the Washington Area Music

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SPINS

REVIEWS EDITED BY JIM GREER

PLATTER DU JOUR

ROBYN HITCHCOCK & THE EGYPTIANS

Perspex Island

A&M

Robyn Hitchcock's art-punk rock band the Soft Boys (the name a cut-and-paste job on two William Burroughs novels, *The Soft Machine* and *The Wild Boys*) posed the question, Why just be a young man with a guitar and a Syd Barrett obsession—why not be a pretty girl in the shower scene from *Psycho*, or an Anglepoise lamp (whatever that was)? Although his song "Human Music" was made into a manifesto when Homestead Records borrowed the title for a label compilation a couple years ago, Hitchcock actually found it difficult to be human, and liked to fantasize about other possibilities. In "The Man Who Invented Himself," Hitchcock pronounced himself a David Bowie pop role-player for an alternate universe. At a time when he had no reason to believe the world knew he existed, Hitchcock abused the rock song as a format for personality transfiguration: He was a star, albeit one with "invisible hits."

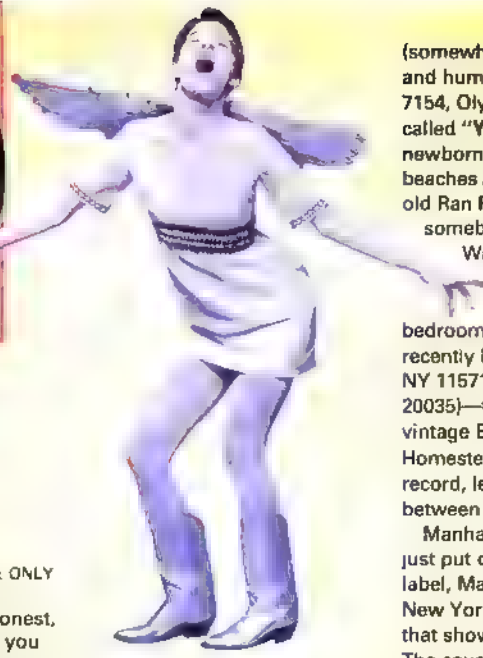
As he left his band and became something like a real star (among white college students, anyway), Hitchcock's music increasingly revealed a dangerous preference for self-expression over communication. The Soft Boys' success had been sustained by Hitchcock's very talented band mates, and apart from their dazzling context his eccentricity started to seem too much the point. Hitchcock's best early songs weren't shaggy-dog stories—they sprang from primordially strong emotions: the desire to become ("I Want to Be an Anglepoise Lamp"), the impulse to annihilate ("I Wanna Destroy You"). Surreal imagery counts for little if it's free-floating apart from any real feeling, and too much of Hitchcock's solo career has been spent cultivating an affected personality.

Fortunately, *Perspex Island* hints at Hitchcock's healthy disenchantment with his own wacky persona (although there are a few annoying moments, like the weird background vocals on "Child of the Universe"). On "Ride," Hitchcock looks back with a shrug at a "long hard decade" and shuffles into the next one, amiably inviting the listener along. Several songs evoke those heady moments of wanting to be or to destroy someone else, while recognizing that one tends to be stuck with oneself: No more will Hitchcock transmogrify before our eyes. "She Doesn't Exist" is the confession of a man cursed with pathological solipsism: "I tell myself it would be different now / I wouldn't treat her that way / I wouldn't be me if she wasn't her / And it's far too late anyway / She doesn't exist anymore." What sounds at first like glib wordplay says something true about a pattern of emotional failure.

Perspex Island ends stunningly with "Earthly Paradise," a long dreamy ballad with steel-guitar shadings. The song unexpectedly terminates with these lines, conveying real bitterness of mysterious origin: "The bastards that destroy our lives are sometimes just ourselves / But mostly they're invisible / I hope they fry in hell." That final invective floats up like a bubble in the langorous music, proving that Hitchcock still has something left he cares about enough to despise. *(available mid-August)*

Ivan Kreilkamp

ILLUSTRATION BY AMY GUIP



Seven Inches of Pure Pleasure

BY JOHAN KUGELBERG

FACE IT, SEVEN-INCH 45s ARE THE ONLY worthwhile medium for true rock'n'roll. They're sloppy, fast, honest, cheap, and fun. You get the song you want, you don't pay for anything else, there's a song on the flip as a bonus, and there's a picture sleeve for you to look at while you're listening.

While the 45 isn't dead, it is more difficult to locate these days. Here are some really good seven-inchers, well worth the hassle of mail order.

D.C.'s finest, the band **Unrest**, have two new seven-inchers on two different West Coast labels. The one on Sub Pop (P.O. Box 20645, Seattle, WA 98102) is the silliest. Mark E. from Unrest decided to pay homage to England's Factory Records by recording four songs by four (somewhat rightfully) neglected Factory bands. Spooky, humorous, and hummable—all at once. The other one's on K Records (P.O. Box 7154, Olympia, WA 98507), home of Beat Happening. The single's called "**Yes She Is My Skinhead Girl**" and it's more delicate than a newborn kitten and peachier than pie: "Fucking fucking on sandy beaches / Kissing kissing all over your faces / Smack smacking on my old Ran Races / Suck sucking where there are no traces." Quick, somebody give this man a Nobel Prize.

When Dinosaur changed its name to Dinosaur Jr., the band started to suck, sort of. Bassist Lou Barlow left the band, the money, and the dinkie-indie pop to record stuff in his bedroom under the name of **Sebadoh**. Forty-fives have recently been released on Homestead (P.O. Box 800, Rockville Centre, NY 11571-0800) and Vertical (P.O. Box 65034, Washington, D.C. 20035)—the latter release being the furthest excursion into the land of vintage Barrett since Robyn Hitchcock became a happy man. The Homestead disc features the hilarious "**Gimme Indie Rock.**" Buy the record, learn the lyrics by heart, and yelp them at the top of your lungs between songs at the next Dino Jr. gig.

Manhattan's finest are a band called **God Is My Co-Pilot.** They've just put out their first record—a four-track seven-incher—on their own label, Making of Americans (P.O. Box 20871, Tompkins Square Station, New York, NY 10009). The two originals are brilliant nervy workouts that show traces of early Gang of Four, Mars, and Mission of Burma. The covers, one Mingus song and a jazz-punk take on "**Iko Iko,**" are like a friendly smiling rat running through the Russian Tea Room.

Last, a 45 that is as refreshing as it is confusing. Two of America's best-loved noise-rock bands have picked out polka-dot shirts, parkas, and pop songs from the rock'n'roll closet. The "**Mod Showdown**" seven-inch on Amphetamine Reptile (2541 Nicollet Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55404), featuring **Mudhoney** and **Halo of Flies** covering songs by Billy Childish's Milkshakes and Marc Bolan's John's Children, is this summer's feel-good-all-over single. Get yourself a portable 45 player at a garage sale and go twisting by the pool.

PHOTO BY EVE PRIME/JOHAN

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The Handy Omniscient SPIN Rating System

●= Go directly to your local record store. Buy this album. Immediately. Kill if you must.

◐= Whoa! Slow down, pal. This album is pretty good, but you can't buy everything in the store. Can you?

○= Stop it. Put that down. Go buy something to eat instead. You have to eat, too, you know.

TIN MACHINE

Tin Machine II

Victory Music

When David Bowie intones "Hello humans . . . " on the chorus of "Baby Universal," the opening track of Tin Machine's second album (a follow-up as eagerly awaited as, say, *Mannequin 2: On the Move*) you can be forgiven for thinking, "Hey, the Zig-nut's back in town." That moment, and a slithery performance on "You Belong in Rock n' Roll" aside, *Tin Machine II* carries on its predecessor's credulity-stretching four-mates-making-a-racket premise and merits attention only as an example of a man made ridiculous by adhering to the rules he himself wrote for his most rickety and least publicly subscribed persona: "You accepted me as Asthmatic Alien. You accepted me as Dance-floor Demagogue. Now accept me as . . . Bearded Member of Astringent Quartet.

No sale. Not from the casual listener who hasn't afforded Bowie dollar one since *Let's Dance* days, nor from the core audience nonplussed by the fact that its favorite Martian's current role requires him to lie back and allow the bass player to mock his beard. *(available early September)*

Jonathan Bernstein

CYPRESS HILL

Cypress Hill

Ruffhouse/Columbia

Take a trip with Cypress Hill to an ultraviolent hip hop soundscape where the necessary tools for survival are a 12-gauge and a fat bag of Buddha. Straight outta Cypress Hill, L.A., the Cypress tribe comes at you with a unique brand of bluesy, blunted funk over grinding hip hop beats. The murky, often noisy production takes you on a personal drive through the Cypress Hill underworld, while zooted beats kick out da speakers.

Cypress Hill takes a straight-up uncompromising look at life in the urban battlefield with songs like "Pigs" (a Daryl Gates favorite) and "How I Could Just Kill a Man," which feature the nasal-toned lyrics of B-Real. Jams like "Stones Is the Way of the Walk," and the instrumental "Something for the Blunted" drop science on the virtues of puffing cheeba while "Latin Lingo" reflects Cypress's Hispanic heritage with Spanglish rhymes by Sen Dog.

The unique Cypress Hill sound has a place unto itself in the hip hop realm. It injects heavy doses of funk into your eardrums, giving you a new way to experience hard-core beats and rhymes. *(available mid-August)*

Rael

LIVING COLOUR

Biscuits EP

Epic

We all know the real reason rock critics wet their pants over Living Colour, so I won't dwell on the issue, except to say that if I was in Mordred or Riot (or, uh, Rush), who do more or less the same pompous sound bite–sludge schtick and suck almost as bad at it, I'd be strongly considering blackface. What I will say is that Corey Glover is fast making a name for himself as one of the worst singers in pop history—the guy hasn't got a fraction of the natural soul of a Lou Gramm (much less an Axl Rose), so he goes all out trying to bust his bluesful gut, like David Coverdale maybe except with *way* more prog-schlock grandeur-delusion. Hence, he winds up combining what are probably the two most witlessly dead-assed vocal strains since Elvis died.

Vernon Reid's got his "intriguing" (in a "jazz" way) moments (strange noises here and there), and if I'm charitable I might say the same about the TV samples. But since this band has yet to write even one "important cause" lyric that engages anything beyond the obvious ("I don't care about your dreams of peace / I don't care about your please lawd please / I don't care about your Africa," etc.), and since the samples and riffs serve no expressive non-showoff purpose, and since tunes and dance grooves must not be nutritious enough, why split hairs?

On their new EP, L.C. minstrelize reggae and reduce extinct James Brown and Al Green standards into heavyhanded guilt-rock turds. Leaving it on the shelf will not make you a racist, I promise. *(available mid-August)*

Chuck Eddy

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SKIN YARD
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SKIN YARD gushes a nasty, volcanic lava that pumps your pole of muscle. On their new LP, 1000 SMILING KNUCKLES, shards of guitars thrust across a murderous bass and drum grind drenched in blood, sweat and screams, pound after pound. Ben's strapping throat lurks and suddenly erupts on each of these ten raw psychopowered SKIN YARD songs. 1000 SMILING KNUCKLES titillates the torso and crunches the cranium with raw psychopower. Produced by Jack Endino. CRZ 017 (LP/CA/CD).
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BIG DRILL CAR
BATCH
BIG DRILL CAR
BIG DRILL CAR is a [illegible] on into a hairpin turn. On their third release, BATCH, this So Cal quartet spinout hard hooks and bone breakin' beats. BIG DRILL CAR slams, screeches and cranks on every cylinder with a lean mix of pop and rock that explodes on contact. Frank Daly's voice snarls atop the shattering rhythms hammered out by Bob Thomson (bass) and Danny Marcroft (drums) while Mark Arnold's guitar overdrive heads for a land speed record. Produced by Bill Stevenson and Stephen Egerton of ALL. CRZ 015 (LP/CA/CD).
ALSO AVAILABLE: ALBUM/TAPE/CD TYPE THING (LP/CA/CD) CRZ 008; SMALL BLOCK (EP/CA EP/CD EP) CRZ 014; "Surrender/Getaway" (Split 7" SNGL w/ CHEMICAL PEOPLE) CRZ 701.
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NEW GIRL, OLD STORY
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NEW GIRL, OLD STORY is a new album of tunes played by some old friends. Tony Lombardo, the original bass dude from the DESCENDENTS, is the TONY in TONYALL. Tony's friends (Bill Stevenson, Karl Alvarez, Stephen Egerton and Scott Reynolds of ALL) are the ALL part of TONYALL. ALL back up TONY on these twelve indelibly stamped Tony type tunes that he wrote over the past decade. Tony shares the vocals with Scott and Karl on this collection of songs about girls and doin' what you'd think they'd be doin' and doin' what you wouldn't
=MAS DISCOS LOCOS=
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ALLROY SEZ...(LP/CA/CD) CRZ 001; "JUST PERFECT" (12" SNGL) CRZ 003; ALLROY FOR PREZ (EP/CA EP/CD EP) CRZ 004; "SHE'S MY EX" (12" SNGL, CA SNGL) CRZ 005; ALLROY'S REVENGE (LP/CA/CD) CRZ 006; TRAILBLAZER (LP/CA/CD) CRZ 010; ALLROY SAVES (LP/CA/CD) CRZ 011
CHEMICAL PEOPLE
SO SEXIST (LP/CA/CD) CRZ 002; TEN-FOLD HATE (LP/CA/CD) CRZ 007; THE RIGHT THING (LP/CA/CD) CRZ 013; "ANGELS 'N' DEVILS" (10" SNGL, CD EP) CRZ 019; "SURRENDER/GETAWAY" (Split 7" w/ BIG DRILL CAR) CRZ 701
CRUZ

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BAD
WORLD.

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TIMBUK 3

Big Shot in the Dark
IRS

Dedicated "to all who crave freedom and sanity," *Big Shot in the Dark* is essential for folks who aren't satisfied with the status quo. On Timbuk 3's fourth, veteran gadflies Pat and Barbara K. MacDonald again puncture the powerful and champion the oppressed, spicing their tasty folk'n'blues with twangy vocal teamwork and a heap o' wit. "The Little Things" starts off as a perky throwaway, then takes aim at the "Petty obsession / With power and success," while "Dis—Land (Was Made for You & Me)" has the gall to mock the complacency fostered by Uncle Walt's empire. Old-time idealists will cheer the sleepy title track, which challenges anyone who's outgrown "all that revolutionary stuff," meaning music and love.

Are the MacDonalds too busy complaining to have fun? Nah. "Mudflap Girl" churns up a sexy late-night groove, boosted by hot Evan Johns guitar. And the pulsing "Sunshine" neatly sums up their sensibility, with an unironic ode to happiness designed to debunk the romance of misery and suffering. Pat'n'Barb might not see themselves as gurus of common sense, but that's exactly what they are. God bless 'em! *(available late August)*

Jon Young

PRONG

Prove You Wrong
Epic

Prong does weird things to your nervous system. The band's sound crawls up into your ganglia, ferocious and eerie, like a horror movie that creeps you out so bad you have to go to sleep with the lights on for days afterward.

Prove You Wrong follows the glorious path of its critically acclaimed major label *Beg to Differ*. Swathed in anger, energy, and dread, Prong work the fine line between thrash and industrial like a high wire—never falling over on either side, never losing their savage grace.

"Unconditional" comes galloping up in your face like the classic surf song "Pipeline" brandishing an Uzi; "Torn Between" explodes with Hendrix-y guitar squeals, while the brooding instrumental "Territorial Rites" delivers a threatening vibe along with its fluid melody line.

New bass hero Troy Gregory (ex–Flotsam & Jetsam) provides a more intricate, punchy complement for Swans alumnus Ted Parsons's precise, blunt-instrument–heavy drum work. Guitarist/front man Tommy Victor still seethes with the pent-up rage of someone who, deprived of rock'n'roll's cathartic properties, could end up as a rooftop sniper. That's a compliment. *(available early September)*

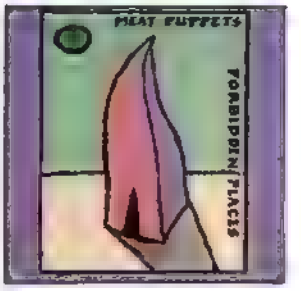
Daina Darzin

MEAT PUPPETS

Forbidden Places
London

The Meat Puppets' dadaist boogie has always danced 'round the edges of pop's penumbra. As far back as 1983's *Meat Puppets II*, guitarist Curt Kirkwood's lickety-licks tickled a sweet spot as wide as home state Arizona is dry. If *Huevos*, the 1987 album that first fully realized the trio's ZZ Top fetish, was an epiphany, then *Forbidden Places*, the band's seventh album, is the payoff.

Admittedly "Sam," the album's opener, isn't exactly "Sharp Dressed Man." A hummable chorus is cloaked in verses sung at a speed familiar to those who have seen the Pups perform full concerts at triple tempo.

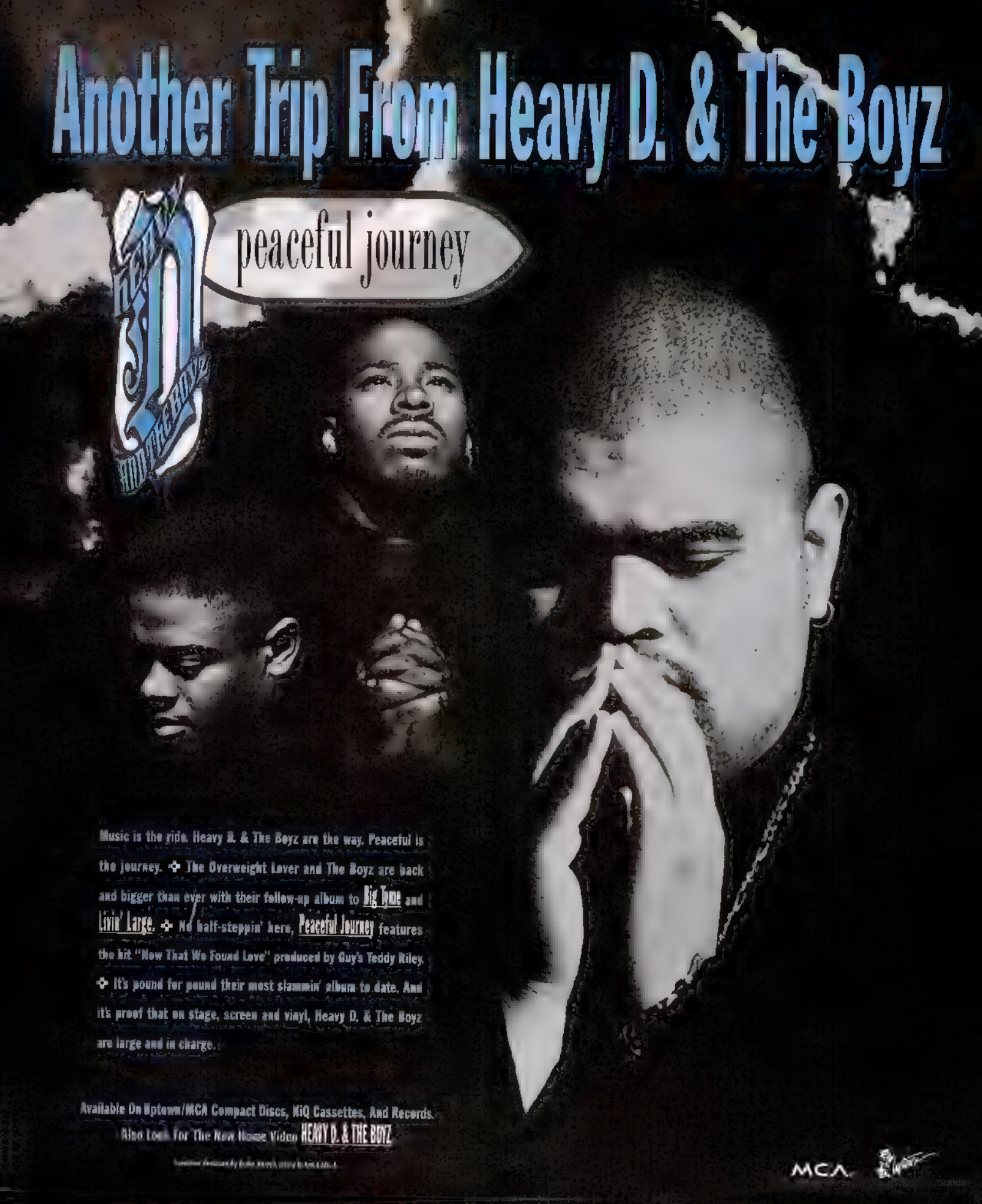


"Nail It Down" dips into cliché ("Don't need a hammer to . . ." etc.) while "This Day" hits it just right—shimmery guitar waves cascade over the workaday rhythms of brother-bassist Cris Kirkwood and drummer Derrick Bostrom. Producer Pete Anderson (Dwight Yoakam, Michelle Shocked) has earmarked this sun-baked country diddle as the band's signature sound. The LP's best tracks circle the established aesthetic like a buzzard.

Meat Puppets lyrics lie past pastiche—"jackets sewn out of dental floss" and "21 little pink salamanders" are typically wriggly lyrical splatters—and remain the perfect complement to the band's half-played, half implied art rock. Still, it's

Another Trip From Heavy D. & The Boyz

peaceful journey



Music is the ride. Heavy D. & The Boyz are the way. Peaceful is the journey. ✣ The Overweight Lover and The Boyz are back and bigger than ever with their follow-up album to Big Tyme and Livin' Large. ✣ No half-steppin' here, Peaceful Journey features the hit "Now That We Found Love" produced by Guy's Teddy Riley. ✣ It's pound for pound their most slammin' album to date. And it's proof that on stage, screen and vinyl, Heavy D. & The Boyz are large and in charge.

Available On Uptown/MCA Compact Discs, HiQ Cassettes, And Records.

Also Look For The New Home Video HEAVY D. & THE BOYZ

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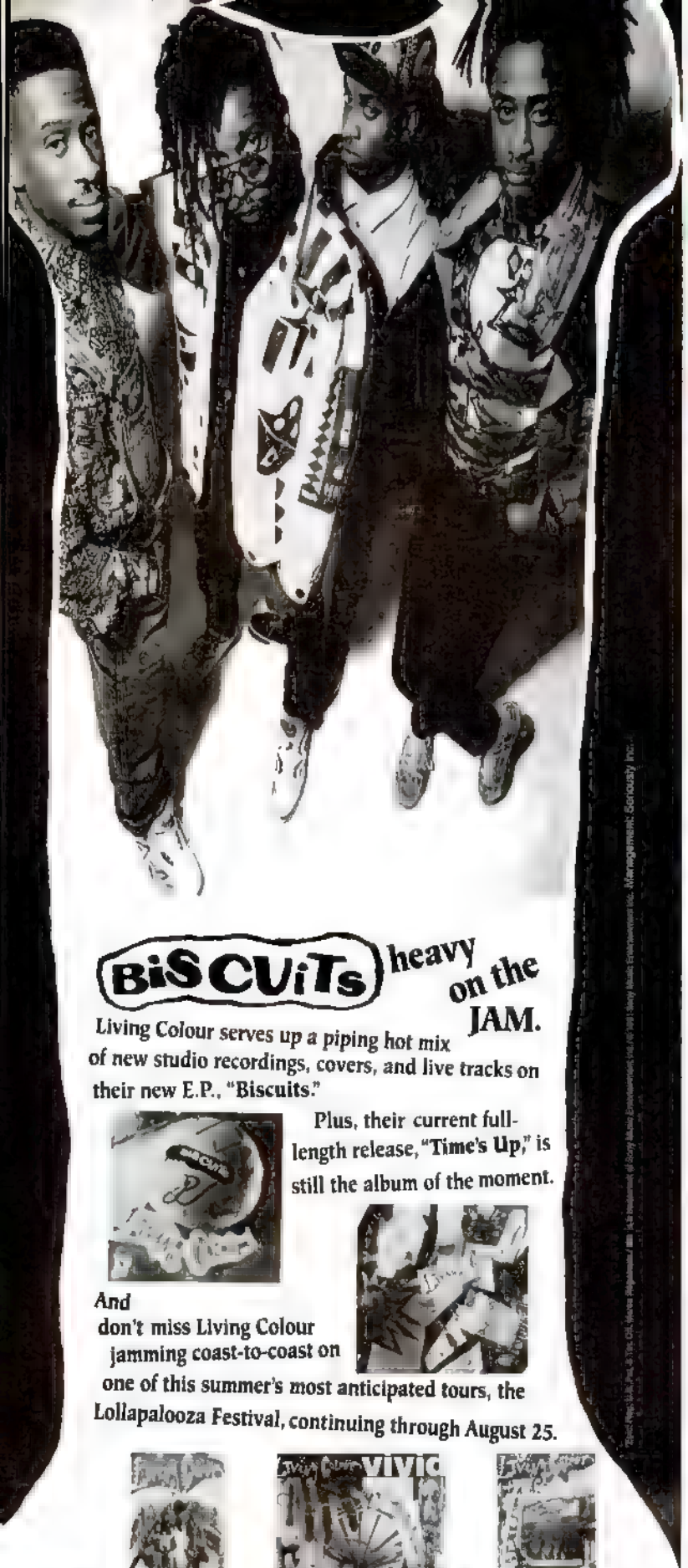
BiSCUiTs heavy on the JAM.
Living Colour serves up a piping hot mix of new studio recordings, covers, and live tracks on their new E.P., "Biscuits."
Plus, their current full-length release, "Time's Up," is still the album of the moment.
And don't miss Living Colour jamming coast-to-coast on one of this summer's most anticipated tours, the Lollapalooza Festival, continuing through August 25.
VIVID
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Also available on CD, cassette and home video.

Heartbeat

BY RICHARD GEHR

FOLLOWING CONVENTIONAL wisdom, classic Jamaican reggae of the '60s and early '70s was inspired by the death of great black pop. When the sound-system kings ran out of sizzling new sides to astound audiences and confound rivals, they began to produce their own music, developing ska as a response to R&B and rock-steady on the heels of soul.

No one adapted quicker or had better ears than Clement "Coxsone" Dodd, the man who first heard the magic in Bob Marley, Burning Spear, and Lee Perry, along with a hundred other greats. Dodd transformed his sound-system prowess into a reggae empire rivaled only by Duke Reid's Treasure Isle. Current reggae pales embarrassingly next to the great black music heard on five new discs of classic Studio One sounds reissued on the Heartbeat label.

At the center of Heartbeat is label coordinator Chris Wilson, a white Jamaican who saw ska, rock-steady, and reggae develop firsthand. "Niney [Winston Holness], Derrick Harriot, Clancy Eccles—these people were my heroes," he says. In 1982, Wilson pitched a Studio One compilation to Heartbeat, who didn't think he'd get lucky with the often diffident Dodd. Twenty-five records later, however, the relationship is flourishing. Mainly, Wilson thinks, because no one ever dealt with the producer in such a straightforward fashion.

"There's a disillusionment that's seeped into the very core of reggae," Wilson explains. "Quite a few of the old producers have been ripped off. Some of them said to me, 'You want to put out a reggae record? You

lines like "Nowhere for me to run / Not that I feel like running anywhere anyway" (from the title track) that best sum up the band's *modus inoperandi*. I think the Meat Puppets are ready for the arena circuit. *(available mid-August)*

Alec Foege

SONNY SHARROCK

Ask the Ages
Axiom/Island

Guitarist Sonny Sharrock is best known (or at least most revered) for his work's skronk-fusionist qualities. His massively searing string-attack has been legendary in noise-fan circles for over two decades. Unfortunately, his last few tours and records have been rather hammy and stupid. It almost seemed as if Sharrock had fallen into the same "maybe I could be the next George Benson" thinking that apparently snared James "Blood" Ulmer a while back. Thankfully, *Ask the Ages* breaks Sharrock's string of duds with a big fuckin' ax.

The playing here is exceptional. Pharoah Sanders is one of the few master sax players from the '60s who is still capable of crushing your head with his ferocious all-out blowing. Drummer Elvin Jones continues to make time dance and roll the way it did when he played with Coltrane. Bassist Charnett Moffett has a deftly lyrical and muscular style that reminds me of Charlie Haden on steroids. And Sharrock? He's a monster. He alternates between thunder-riffing underneath Pharoah's god-punch horn lines, raking fuzzy note clusters out of thin air, then parading around like a drunk Jimi Hendrix in a romantic mood. Even Bill Laswell's production is great—it has the same gorgeous (prediqital) clarity that marked many classic Impulse recordings from the mid-'60s.

must be a fool.' "

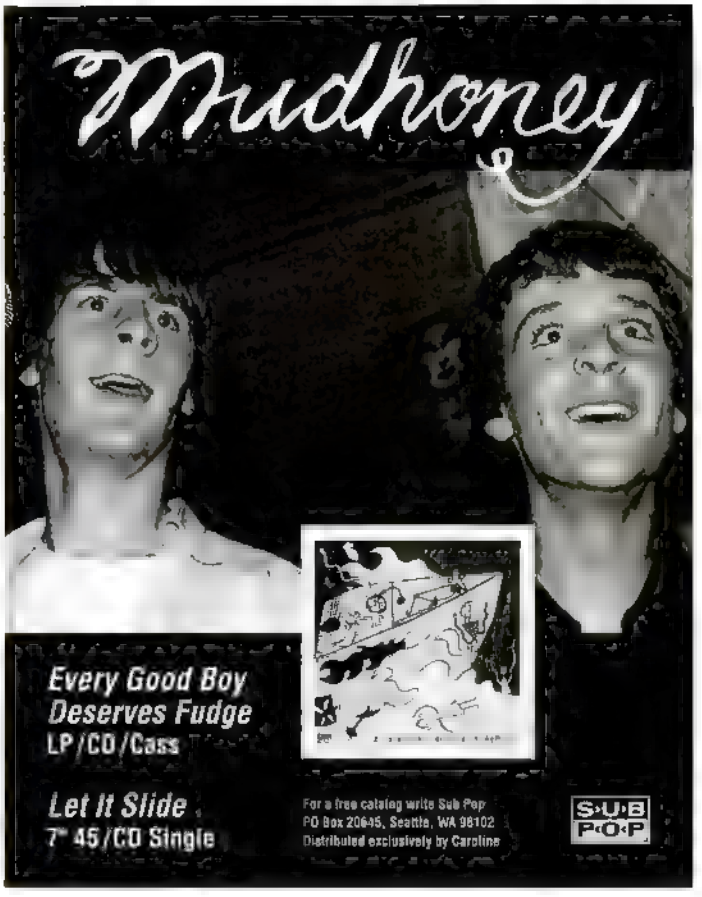
Thanks to Wilson, you can now digitally dig the audacious way Dennis Alcapone tears apart a particularly soupy rendition of "Everbody's Talking" on *Forever Version*, the Lone Ranger's *On the Other Side of Dub*, and the smoothly oozing rhythmic virtuosity of Dodd's house band, as heard on *Soul Defenders at Studio One*. *Bobby Babylon* could well be Freddie McGregor's best album, while Slim Smith (*Born to Love*) and the Cables (*What Kind of World*) are lost treasures.

Although roots groups such as Culture, Israel Vibration, and the Itals maintain popularity primarily with white fans, modern reggae thrives in the hyperactive electronic blip-bloop of dancehall and ragamuffin styles. Does Wilson think anyone will be assembling loving compilations of Steely and Clevie 20 years from today?

"No. It's all done too quickly now. Back then, you had to pass an audition to record, you didn't just go in and put down a tune. The singers who were looked up to then were people like Curtis Mayfield and the Tams. I once had a long discussion with Gaylads lead singer B.B. Seaton. I said, 'This is a sublime recording. Everything's perfect. What's it all about?' He said, 'Well, I tell you the truth: We wanted to be the Temptations.' "

WONDERFUL WORLD

Baaba Maal, *Baya* (Mango); **National Dance Company of Cambodia**, *Homrong* (Virgin); **Sonny Okosuns**, *African Soldiers* (Profile).



From start to finish, *Ask the Ages* is a fantastic record. Guitar has never been used this well inside of a "pure" jazz format. If Sharrock were to assemble a band like this on a permanent basis, I think they'd go a lot of places that humans have never visited. *(available early September)*

Byron Coley

FUDGE TUNNEL

Hate Songs in E Minor
Relativity/Earache

Earache-label bands do strange things to my sound system. While listening to Godflesh, the alien sounds coming out of my box had me convinced that someone was breaking into SPIN's offices. Now, while writing this Fudge Tunnel review, my tape deck keeps turning itself off. Are these signs? If I give the Fudge Tunnel release a bad review, will unspeakable things happen to me? Luckily I'll never find out the answer to that last question because this album has been in my Walkman for the better part of the month. Hope that doesn't mean my earphones are going to explode on my head.

This musical treat is actually far more user-friendly than either Fudge Tunnel's name or the title of the release would suggest. Hardcore meets guitar rock at its loudest and finest. The guys dedicate the album to the Nuge, they're from England, they do an unremarkable remake of "Cat Scratch Fever," but redeem themselves with a remodeled "Sunshine of Your Love," which totally steams. "Tweezers" and "Bed Crumbs" are awesome grunge feasts. Blow through this selection of finery, since every good girl and boy deserves a Fudge Tunnel. *(available mid-August)*

Lauren Spencer

KIX

Hot Wire
East West

Just as it's common knowledge that the correct procedure when taking possession of a new Luther Vandross album is to stab the CD selector in search of the cover version, so the first reaction upon receipt of any fresh mainstream-aimed metal album is "Where's the ballad?" Heavy Pop's muscling in on Hallmark territory these days. Pretty soon, a "High Enough" or a "More Than Words" is going to replace "We've

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David Bowie

By Steven Daly

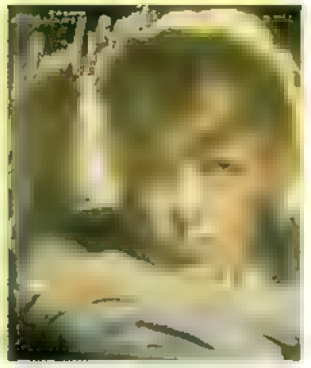
THE PLUMMETING INTRO TO DAVID Bowie's "Young Americans" announces the start of the most febrile creative burst ever enjoyed by any rock performer—and that includes Sting. The Thin White Duke's fat period was to last through *Heroes* (and to include his Iggy Pop resurrections, *The Idiot* and *Lust for Life*), each record a greater stylistic leap than most artists manage in a lifetime.

On *Young Americans* Bowie's chosen vehicle was soul, and the title track motors frictionlessly along behind tinted windows, casting an elegantly jaundiced eye on Nixon's America, like an Altman film costume-designed by Armani. Each of the album's numb narcotic confections slip down all the easier thanks to phoned-in contributions from calloused sessioneers of the Sanborn stripe.

Although this dilettante dip into soul became the blueprint for a whole generation of British bright boys, Bowie's actually forged a classic set that ranks alongside *Let's Get It On* and *Rapture* as a seamless soundtrack for seduction.

"So I've done soul. . . . What's next?" The reinvention of modern rock music in the strident gloom, pared-down funk, hammy balladry, and *mittel*-European hauteur of *Station to Station*. By covering soundtrack maven Dimitri Tiompkin's breathtaking "Wild Is the Wind," Bowie sets the wide-screen scale for an album that makes much of his previous ouevre resemble bar-band boogie in comparison.

Next, David schlepped his weltschmerz to the Berlin wall (ah, nostalgia!), an act that was widely greeted with disbelief—you call this mechanical monstrosity *music*?! But a decade and a half later, the relentless *motorik* and synthetic sweep of *Low* sounds almost hokey—roots music for the sound-bite age. A perfect companion piece to Bowie's sci-fi romp, *The Man Who Fell to Earth*, it's also a mighty testament to the sonic savoir faire of coproducer Brian Eno; old chrome-dome sprinkles the Germanic future-funk with humanizing touches like dreamy Stax licks ("Sitting on the Dock of the Bauhaus"!), aching harmonica lines, and rollicking piano.


Synthetic soul's unacknowledged legislator.

After cracking us up with his best cockney accent ("Oi! Mary Poppins!") the singer himself remains mysteriously mute for the home nine, noodling away at voiceless New Age nothings like "Art Decade" and "Subterraneans." From such ludicrous ingredients are classic records fashioned.

There could have been no better bookend to Bowie's reign than *Heroes*, an atmosphere-drenched downer with paranoid overtones. The title track, once a statement of supremacy, now reads as a touching valedictory to a disappearing era, a piece of nostalgia as quaint as the Berlin wall itself.

Of course, *Heroes* led to *Lodger*, then the slippery slope to bad flicks, oldies tours, and, eventually, the menopausal madness of Tin Machine. But forgive David Bowie the rest of his crummy career, and remember him on that sunny winter afternoon on the Alexanderplatz when tomorrow belonged to him. . . .

Only Just Begun" at the top of wedding reception rotation.

Kix, a unit adamant in its insistance that no greater music was made before, or since, *Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap*, come up sadly lacking in terms of songs to dedicate to That Special Someone, but the band clatters through *High Wire* album with enough verve to make *The Razors Edge* sound arthritic. Though vets of a decade of active service, these guys have been tweaked-up to sound like crotch-fingering, post-pubescents, an affectation they carry off with aplomb particularly on the title track, "Luv-a-holic," "Rock n' Roll Overdose," and their wide-of-the-mark shot at a spaniel-eyed ballad, "Tear Down the Walls," fails the taste test. The search for the new Alessi continues. . . . *(available mid-August)*

Jonathan Bernstein

FRANKIE KNUCKLES

Beyond the Mix

Virgin

When it comes to house music—in this, the age of the dance music album—personality, versatility, and voice always save the day. Frankie Knuckles, one of the godfathers of urban house stylings, comes correct on his debut album, combining strong songwriting (hooks, choruses, fun!) with a production style that's clean (without being sterile) and accessible (without pandering).

Knuckles knows how to bring the party to vinyl. "Rainfalls," with the plink-plink piano lines slinking around the bass and drum, erupts from the intro and slides into the groove with roller coaster intensity, controlling the dips and spins. Lisa Michaelis's vocals—"Let the rain fall Let it all fall"—sprinkle the track between open-ended keyboard fills; she may as well be singing about the sweat that puddles the dance floor Eric Kupper's flute solo opening "The Whistle Song" bathes the track with the most atmospheric instrumentation this side of the U.K.'s Soul II Soul- Massive Attack house axis.

"Beyond the Mix" further ups the dance music ante, joining the long-playing successes of Stevie V. and Lil Louis in challenging the otherwise cynical, often derivative, and quickly stale attempts at radio-friendly dance stuff. Ending with the smooth beauty of "Soon I Will Be Done," Frankie Knuckles turns a church traditional into pop-gospel for the masses. The Club Experience-As-Religious Ecstasy is a tried and true metaphor. But here it works, Frankie Knuckles, is, after all, one of the first and reigning reverends of club. *(available mid-August)*

Scott Poulson-Bryant

METALLICA

Metallica

Elektra

As chronicler of life according to smart but pent-up American adolescents, reeling with angst but unsusceptible to lethal doses of parent-teacher dogma and, um, mo-

rality, Metallica is all

Kill 'Em All, the band's 1983 debut, set singer-guitarist James Hetfield's adenoidal bark against lyrics like "We are gonna kick some ass tonight." Okay for heavy-metal folks; less okay for those getting said asses kicked. Backed by speed-metal with jump, though, early Metallica expertly exorcised the demons of suburban boredom. By 1988's . . . *And Justice for All*, a finer four fellows whipping shoulder-length tresses in sync with Wagnerian-scale arpeggiated operettas could not be found (in case you'd been looking).

Admire *Metallica*, the band's sixth release, for its precisely rendered harmonies (!), winsome guitar runs,

and Brobdingnagian drum wallops. "Enter Sandman," the opener and first single, is a revelation in itself. Big, loud, and sleek, it brandishes an open-throated Hetfield—perhaps the first successful attempt at melding metal's ascetic splendor with, well, a melody. From the anthemic "The Unforgiven" to the antiJunkhead "Holier Than Thou," Metallica plies a newfound versatility. Pay special attention to lead guitarist Kirk Hammett's wonderful wah-wah. Even the flag imagery on "Don't Tread on Me" flies, as does "Of Wolf and Man," the obligatory hunt song. At turns algebraically elegant and geometrically raucous, present-day Metallica can stop and start on a dime.

New producer Bob Rock, not one for making a speeding bullet taste like a sweetish breakfast treat, has nonetheless kept song lengths under six minutes. No longer a guilty pleasure for those who felt guilty, and certainly no source of guilt for those who didn't, *Metallica*-brand Metallica is a burnished black gem. *(available mid-August)*

Alec Foege

AMERICAN MUSIC CLUB

Everclear

Alias

American Music Club hasn't been the soundtrack for the four-o'clock-in-the-morning-lovesick-blues for a whole lot of people as of yet, which is a shame. With the release of *Everclear*, the time slot where Leonard Cohen, Joy Division, and Nick Cave have reigned on the turntables of the lost and lonely may find its playlist changed.

Where listening to, say, Roy Orbison will leave you stuck wading through your own emotional molasses, even the most morose AMC song still throws you a life buoy and pulls you out of your misery. The only performer ever to do this for me before was Jacques Brel, and I guess that comparing AMC to Brel will do wonders for the ego of a band who have spent way too many years struggling, while the likes of Sting have sold zillions.

Songwriter Mark Eitzel is a very moving singer and lyricist, with a strong sense of the pathetic, in the sense of *pathos*. *Everclear* is the band's most polished album to date—the production and instrumentation is as crisp as on Roxy Music's *Avalon*. This is an album to return to time and time again. *(available early September)*

Johan Kugelberg

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SKUNK
Laid
Twin/Tone

Smells like a hit. . . . Sorry about that, just had to lay a small pun in there. Actually, through no fault of the band's and the miracles of record companies, Skunk's new album should have been out ages ago, but this end-of-summer release will make the listening public happy enough to run to the store immediately and buy it. Now, about the music: kind of a cross between Living Colour and the Grateful Dead—no, that's not quite it. Kiss meets Color Me Badd—close, but that's not it either. Basically songs like "The Best" and "Dummy"—my personal pick for the first single—have really clean lines that lead dangerously close to '70s rock in its glory days. The trio of Matts—yes, they're all named Matt—who man the band are all only 21 or so, and the fact that they can make noise this good means that maybe there is hope for the future *(available early August)*

Lauren Spencer

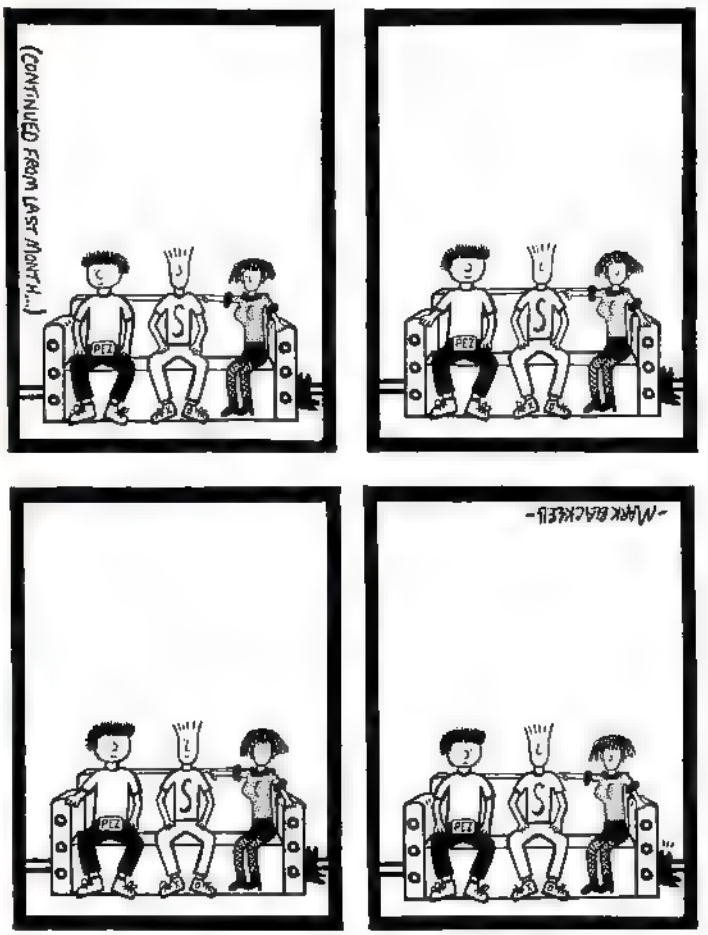
PAVEMENT
Perfect Sound Forever
Drag City

It's almost as if Pavement can't be bothered, really. I've managed to run into most members of the band in various bars around Manhattan. They're all good-looking, they don't do drugs, they're really smart and exceptionally funny, so why the hell did they form a rock'n'roll band? Their reply—that it's dirty work but someone's gotta do it—just doesn't cut it. Well, whatever—their new seven-song EP, *Perfect Sound Forever*, bubbles over with more ideas than on the last three Sonic Youth albums combined.

Fanzine geeks have compared the band to early TV Personalities and the Swell Maps, but that's too easy. Listening to Pavement is more like trying to listen to three radio stations at once: One is playing Simon and Garfunkel, one is playing the Bobby Fuller Four, and the third one's just static. *(available from Drag City, P.O. Box 476867, Chicago, IL 60647)*

Johan Kugelberg

Little Sutty's Quest for Music *by Mark Blackwell*



Fugazi

continued from page 48

do the show the way we wanted. And we weren't always a big band. We did two whole tours before our first album even came out."

On the band's most recent tour, Fugazi played venues ranging from hotel ballrooms in Huntsville, Alabama, to beach clubs at Virginia Beach. In Savannah, Georgia, Fugazi

"I don't think that the mechanisms that exist in mass media are sensitive enough to what we want to do. That's why we don't sign to a major."

found itself with no club to play in until the young owner of the Sun Wine Bar and Cafe closed down shop for the night to make space for 150 people to crowd around a hastily constructed stage.

"Clubs just don't want a part of it," Tris Coffin, the co-owner of the Sun Cafe, says. "No one wants to deal with a five-dollar show and a bunch of kids. They can't make that much money, and they're worried it will get out of hand."

Even though some clubs may pull back from booking the band, there are still major labels looking to make a deal. Most of them, in fact. The figures are in all the right places. Fugazi has independently sold over 415,000 records (the band's 1990 LP, *Repeater*, has sold over 143,000 alone), a figure indie label distributors say could easily triple were the band to sign with a major label. And although the late August release of Fugazi's new LP, *Steady Diet of Nothing*, promises to sell even better, the band remains committed to its independence.

"There are some major labels who are suddenly enamored of us because our name is on a list in some trade publication," MacKaye says. "Those people I really don't have much time for because they really don't have time for me. We're just not interested. There's nothing the labels can offer us that would be worth the loss of control over our own music.

"What I've learned over the years is that I can't stop certain things from happening," he continues. "Bands want to be big and labels want to sell records. And ultimately it's up to the consumers, the people who are buying the records. No one puts a gun to their head.

"Ultimately," MacKaye concludes, "It doesn't make a difference what you talk about, it's what you do. And that's the way it's always been."

N.W.A

continued from page 57

Dre: Only responsibility we got is to make records, make money, and eat.
SPIN: You don't care about putting out any message?
Dre: Hell, no!
Eazy: [*Raising his glass*] Fuck the world!

THAT WEEK AT MADISON SQUARE Garden there was a World Wrestling Federation event called a Body Bag Match, because in order to win, one wrestler had to stuff the other into a body bag. The day after I interviewed N.W.A, I saw the Ultimate Warrior challenging the Undertaker on TV. He was screaming about killing the Undertaker and cramming him into the body bag piece by piece. "Who's watching this?" I was thinking. And as I sat there eating my grilled cheese sandwich I realized that *I* was watching it. And I was being entertained.

N.W.A is a lot like the WWF. Its members are always in character, blurring the distinction between fantasy and reality. What's being sold is a carefully constructed world of carefully crafted personae. Escapist entertainment. It doesn't matter if Eazy and crew are the characters they claim to be or not. The Ultimate Warrior probably never killed anybody either, but I'll bet he'd hit me if I pissed him off at dinner. Eazy-E is the Ultimate Warrior of rap. There's nothing really wrong with what he's doing. He's just packaging a product. And people are eating it up.

Bon appétit.

WE CAN'T TELL YOU
WHO'S ON THE MR. BUNGLE RECORD

WE CAN'T PRINT THE LYRICS
FROM THE MR. BUNGLE RECORD

But here's a brief list of the topics covered on Mr. Bungle's debut.

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Oral Sex With Cultural Icons
Viscous Secretions And Other Bodily Fluids
Bondage Fantasies
Phone Sex
Body Parts And How They Fit Together
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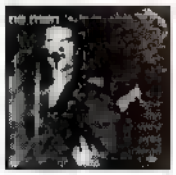
no man — how the west was won



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Antihero

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most creative, the most innovative, most daring members of our generation are the ones who took the drugs, and they went so far out that they couldn't come back. Anyway, when I got to Yale, the people who ended up going to graduate school and got through it, who got the jobs and rose to the top, these are the ones who are in power now. It's not true that the radicals of the '60s are now in a position of tenure and control. Those people dropped out. Either they got screwed up because of too much drugs, or it was a sexual orgy that ended up in sexual diseases. I'm saying, and I'm going to get a lot of shit for this, I'm saying that AIDS came out of that promiscuity and we have to accept that. But people say, "Don't say that, don't say that it has any connection to behaviorism because if you do, then Jesse Helms will say it's a curse from God and you deserve what happens to you blah, blah, blah, and the government won't give you money." Well, I am a product of the real radical '60s. I stand for free thought and free speech and will not allow anyone to tell me that I cannot write the history of my own generation because we have to be careful of what's going to happen. This is absolute free speech above all, and may I point out, Lenny Bruce, who was very important to my generation, recited in nightclubs, all the words—*kike*, *nigger*, *wop*, et cetera. Why did he do that? Not against the conservatives; it was against the *liberals*. And again we have that situation now, where these well-meaning but very foggy liberals say, "We don't want to hear those words, we have to protect the poor people who they might offend." But we have to hear those words again and again. Rock does this. Say the words again. Put them on walls. Fly them from the flags on top of ivory towers. We in the '60s knew that the liberals were our enemies, too—not just the conservatives. Before this, the liberals in the '50s, who came from the '30s generation, were very smart people, very politically astute. They were deeply read in political science. What's happened today? These liberals who are in academia do not have any political thinking whatsoever. They just sort of absorbed these mushy ideas from the air. Many of these people who are now in power are people of the '50s who are pretending to be leftists when they have just been obedient, going-with-the-flow–type people. There is no political discourse anymore.

It's just sort of, like, "Yeah, racial equality, I'm for that." Liberalism today is just a bunch of feelings which have not been tested by reality, and it's now the majority in academia. Liberals are no longer the minority—they are the establishment. Today, conservatives, being the minority, are often very intellectually vigorous. They know that their belief system differs from what's around them and because of that they are very conscious of their own ideology and of their own assumptions. Whereas liberals, because they are of the establishment, because they are a majority, have never had to identify and articulate their own political assumptions. They don't believe they have an ideology. In my experience, in my life as a '60s person, the worst reactions I've ever had in my life, going back to the '50s, are from these liberals, from the girl-scout troop leaders who are liberals. They are these volunteer ladies who had decided, "Yes, racial equality"—they were the ones who couldn't stand me the most, not the conservatives. Anyway, the big scam is that these people are vicious, very vicious, these people at the top. They are people who have enormous salaries, I'm talking about Johns Hopkins and Yale, they have, like, hundred-thousand-dollar salaries; the only people they ever see in their classes are the products of prep schools. They have no idea how removed from reality their ideas, their plan for the future, is for the poor. My mother came over here at age six from Italy—she didn't speak a word of English. When she came over here, the American educational system didn't say, "Oh, you poor immigrant, all you can understand is everything from Italian culture, keep Italian. Naturally, we would never impose English on you." Today, with the Hispanics, it's "Oh no, let them speak their own language." This is a recipe for disaster, for keeping them in second-class status forever. And look what happened within one generation. Education needs to be rigorous and conservative. None of this, "Oh, we are going to help you"—help keep you right in that little cul-de-sac you are in.

SPIN: Although all that is well-intended, it's condescension, ultimately, that holds people back.

Paglia: And here's another thing that I've been saying. I've been say-

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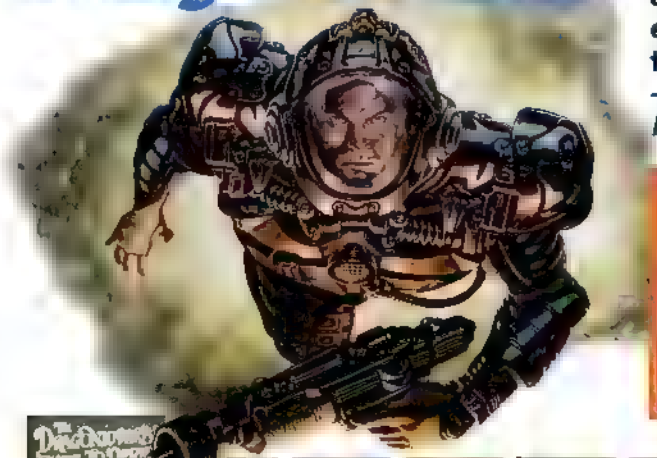

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Antihero

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ing that all of this date-rape propaganda has been coming out of the elite schools, where the guys are all these cooperative, literate, introspective, sit-on-their-ass guys, whereas you're not getting it down in these football schools where people accept the fact of the beauty and strength of masculinity. You see these jocks on the campus all the time—they understand what manhood is down there. It's only up here where there is this idea that they can get men on a leash. It's these guys in the Ivy League schools who get used to obeying women. They're sedentary guys. It's ironic that you're getting the biggest bitching about men from the schools where the men are just eunuchs and bookworms.

SPIN: That point about primordial male sexuality is also at odds with much contemporary pop psychology. I'm referring to the twelve-step, women-who-love-too-much school of thought, which insists that a woman's attraction to an "untamed" man as it were, is necessarily a sign of sickness—a sign of a warped emotional life that invariably traces back to childhood, and the attention span of the father. It never considers such an attraction to be a naturally occurring phenomenon—a force of nature. I think the approach to remedying the problem is simplistic, even dangerously so at times.

Paglia: I agree. I'm a Freudian. I like Freud very much, even though I adapt him and add things to him. But his system of analysis is extremely accurate. It's a conflict-based system that allows for paradox. It's also very self-critical and self-analytical. I've watched therapy getting more and more mushy in the last fifteen years in America—it's really disgusting. Instead of being self-analytic and self-critical, it's become what I call coercive compassion. It's disgusting, it's condescending, it's insulting, it's coddling, it keeps everyone in an infantile condition rather than in the adult condition that was postulated as the ultimate goal of Freudian analysis. You were meant to be totally self-aware as a Freudian. Now, it's everyone who will help you, the group will help you. It's awful. It's a return to the '50s conformist model of things. It's this victim-centered view of the world, which is very pernicious. We cannot have a world where everyone is a victim. "I'm this way because my father made me this way. I'm this way because my husband made me this way." Yes, we are indeed formed by traumas that happened to us. But then you must take charge, you must take over, you are responsible. Personal responsibility is at the heart of my system.

But today's system is this whining thing. "Why won't you help me, Mommy and Daddy?" It's like this whole thing with date rape. Girls want to go to fraternity houses, drink eleven tequilas, go off to a guy's room, and then they're wondering, "Gee, what happened?" We of the '60s, we demanded an end to the double standard. We said, "No more parental rules! Get out of our sex lives!" We understood there were risks; we understood that you could go to a place and you could get raped.

SPIN: One point that hasn't been made in the whole rape debate is the role of women's over men, sexually. In the case of a rape, a man has to use brute force to obtain something that a woman has—her very sex. So naturally she's weaker physically, and will always be oppressed by him physically. But in that moment when he decides that the only way he can get what he wants from her emotionally, or sexually, or whatever, is to rape her, he is confessing to a weakness that is all-encompassing. She is abused, but he is utterly tragic and pathetic. One is temporary and the other is permanent. I was raped once and it helped me to think of it like that. Not at all to apologize for him, but to focus on my power instead of my helplessness. It was a horrible experience, but it certainly didn't destroy my whole life or my psyche, as much as contemporary wisdom insisted it must have.

Paglia: Right, we *have* what they want. I think woman is the dominant sex. Men have to do all sorts of stuff to prove that they are worthy of a woman's attention.

It's very interesting what you said about the rape, because one of the German magazine reporters who came to talk to me—she's been living in New York for ten years—she came to talk to me about two weeks ago and she told me a very interesting story, very similar to yours. She lives in Brooklyn, and she let this guy in who she shouldn't have, and she got raped. She said that, because she's a feminist, she'd have to go to counseling now. She said it was awful, that the minute she arrived there, the rape counselors were saying, "You will never recover from this, what's happened to you is so terrible." She said, what the hell, it was a terrible experience, but she was going to pick herself up, and it wasn't that big a deal. The whole system now is designed to make you feel that you are maimed and mutilated forever if something like that happens. She said it made her feel worse. It's absolutely American—it is not European—and the whole system is filled with these clichés about sex. I think there is a fundamental prudery about sex in all this. Rape is one of the risk factors in getting involved with men. It's a risk factor. It's like driving a car. My attitude is, it's like gambling. If you go to Atlantic City—these girls are going to Atlantic City, and when they lose, it's like "Oh Mommy and Daddy, I lost." My answer is stay home and do your nails, if that's the kind of person you are. My '60s attitude is, yes, go for it, take the risk, take the challenge—if you get raped, if you get beat up in a dark alley in a street, it's okay. That was part of the risk of freedom, that's part of what we've demanded as women. Go with it. Pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and go on. We cannot regulate male sexuality. The uncontrollable aspect of male sexuality is part of what makes sex interesting. And yes, it can lead to rape in some situations. What feminists are asking for is for men to be castrated, to make eunuchs out of them. The powerful, uncontrollable force of male sexuality has been censored out of the white middle-class homes. But it's still there in black culture, and in Spanish culture. They have no problem with it. ⊕

This is the first of a two-part interview.

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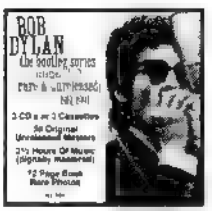

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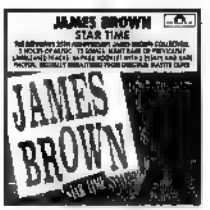

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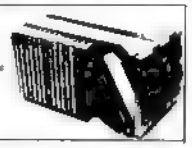

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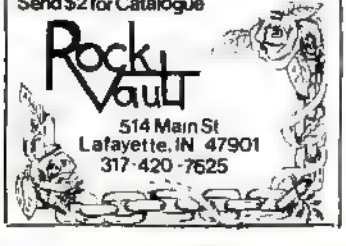

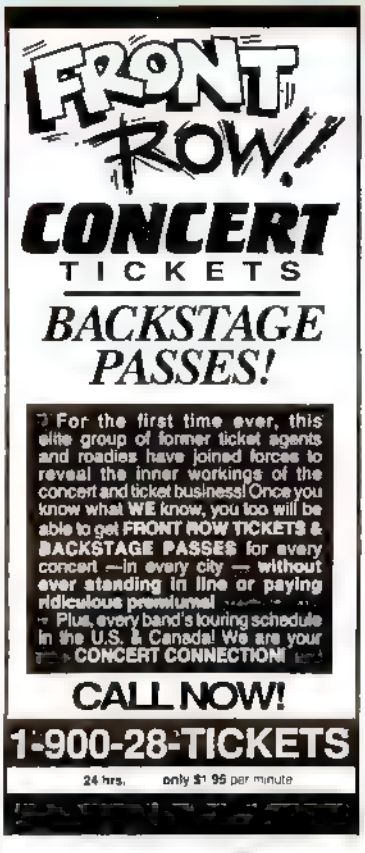
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BACK PAGE

So you want to be a rock'n'roll star? Better hit the books, pal. It's no longer enough to be a rebel without a cause—you have to be a rebel with a degree in music. A number of schools have actually begun to offer courses in rock music. Seriously. By JIM GREER.

YOU KNOW, ONE OF THE BEAUTIFUL things about rock'n'roll was always that even a retard like me can play it. Wild-eyed enthusiasm and a talent for getting in trouble used to be the only prerequisites for climbing onstage and making a fool of yourself. Now, it seems, you need to study in special schools the proper way to climb onstage and make a fool of yourself. It's real important that you do this, because apparently people will not pay you to make a fool of yourself unless you do it the proper way.

There have always been music schools, places where you learn how to play serious music with serious teachers and serious tuition fees. But rock was never meant to be serious music, and doesn't deserve to be taught in places where everyone looks like Pat Metheny. Pat Metheny is a jazzbo. Rock musicians should not look like jazzbos. Nevertheless, owing I guess to the growing technical proficiency of the hordes of stoner kids who lock themselves in their bedrooms for their entire teenaged existence learning to duplicate every Yngwie Malmsteen lick ever licked, rock has begun to be taken seriously as music by the jazzbos. Or at least by the fusion jazzbos, who are even worse-looking. Courses covering various aspects of rock'n'roll are now offered at even the most prestigious jazzbo schools. And this is all wrong.

Going to school to learn how to play rock music is as pointless (though probably not as fun) as going to school to learn how to have sex. What exactly does it mean when you have a master's degree in percussion? That you can drum your fingers on the table better than I can? And how is that supposed to help you play "I Wanna Be Your Dog?"

Full of no-talent musoids with fleet hand-finger-eye-kneecap coordination, these hack shops are designed to exterminate whatever latent creativity might exist in your puny, undeveloped character. The music you're likely to churn out upon graduating will doubtless be algebraically correct, but will it, um, rock? Or will it simply follow the principles you learned in *Rock Arranging for Live Performance*? ("Techniques of instrumental and vocal arranging in contemporary rock styles with emphasis on live situations. . . . " from Boston's Berklee College of Music 1991–92 catalog.)

True passion for music can doubtless escape even a place like Berklee unscathed, but why would you want to bother? Unless it's your goal in life to be an L.A. session player, in which case if I were you I'd be seriously thinking about a good satanic-pact lawyer.

A much better musical education can be had at the source. Listen to the music. Buy the records. Go to shows. The most creative musicians usually have the biggest record collections (and not just because they're rich and can afford them—not very many of the most creative musicians have much money). Creativity isn't really about breaking rules so much as ignoring or rearranging them to suit the specific needs of whatever it is you feel like doing. And you can't learn how to do that in any kind of school.

No one should be able to tell you what's right or wrong in rock music—because there is no right or wrong. There's only what you like. Trying to formalize the elements in something as unpredictable and, at its best, spontaneous as rock is an inherently fruitless task. Why is there a *Rock Guitar: Intermediate* course at the Guitar Study Center in New York? (*Beginning Principles of Lead Guitar* is also offered.)

How is anything different, or original, going to come out of a course that teaches a right way and a wrong way to play an instrument?

Most of the important innovations in rock have come from people *not* knowing how something is done, and trying to reproduce something they'd heard, getting it wrong, and inventing something entirely new in the process. Getting it wrong is perhaps the fundamental innovative force in rock music—but try telling that to your teacher.

So forget the teachers. Forget the schools. You're better off on your own, making your own painful way toward some idea of your own conception. Even if you never get there, even if you end up white-knuckled in frustration and decide to give up entirely, at least you probably still won't know what a ninth-diminished chord is or how to play one. And that's a very fine thing, indeed.

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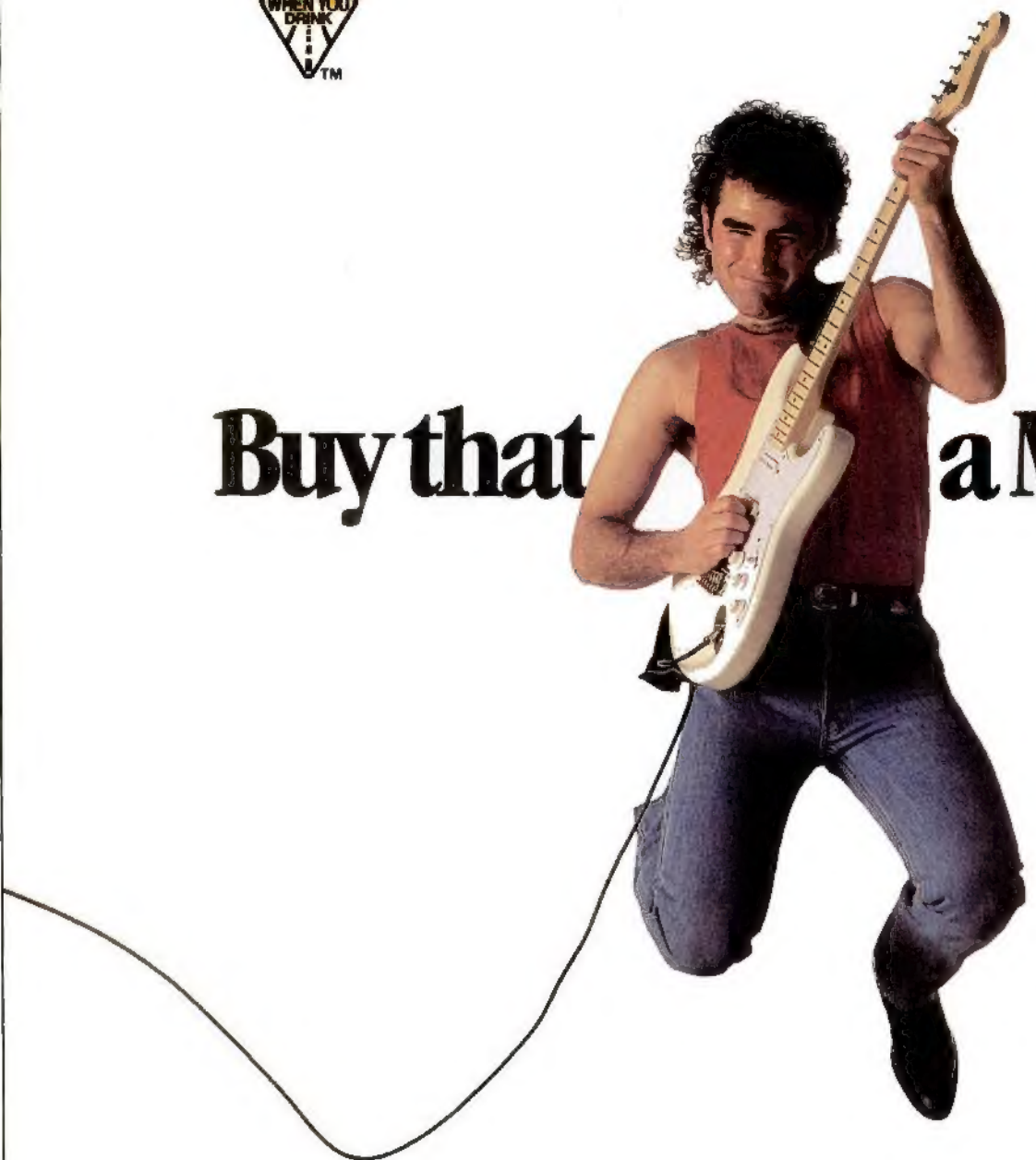

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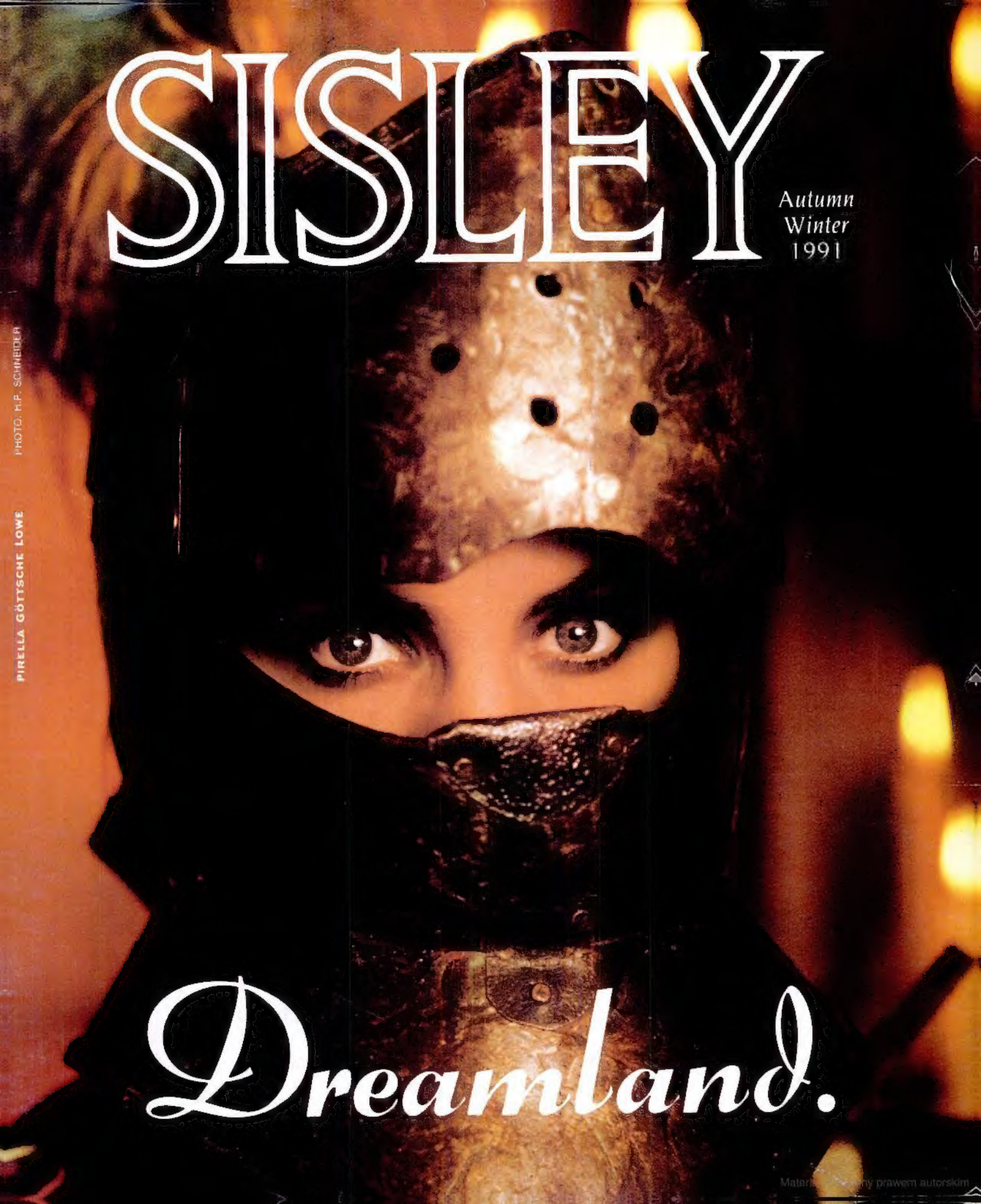

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